GUS HARVEY

The Boy Skipper of Cape Ann

By

Capt Charlton L. Smith

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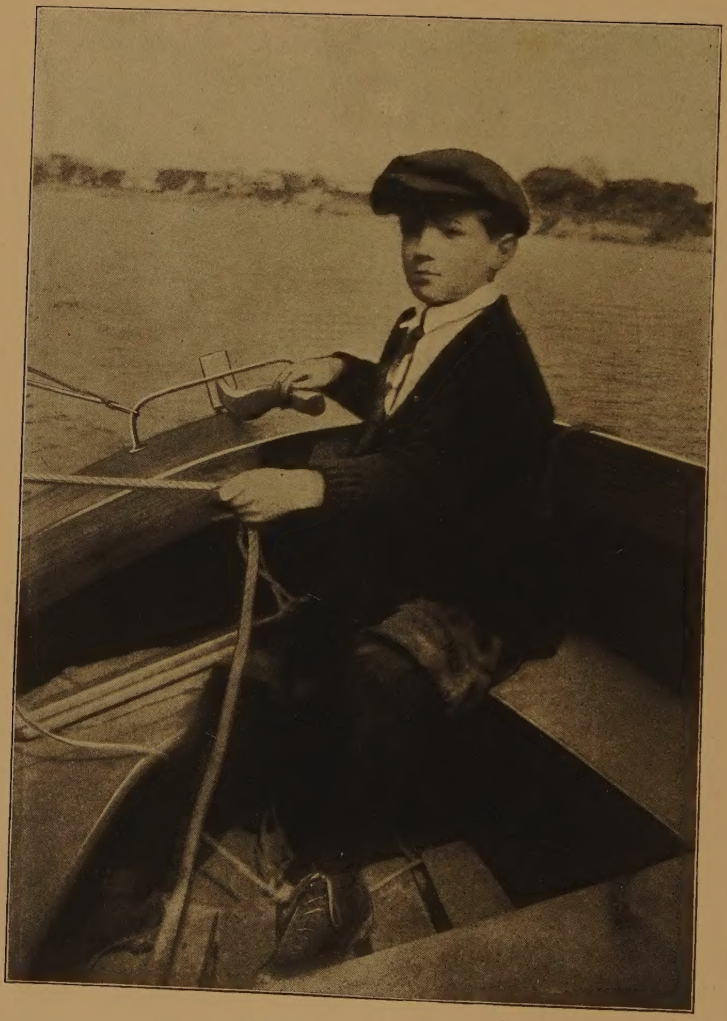

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THE BOY SKIPPER OF CAPE ANN

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLTON LYMAN SMITH

BOSTON
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1920

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To

JOHN L. FRISBEE

THE SHIP-BUILDER AND NAVAL ARCHITECT, WHO TAUGHT ME A TRADE AND A PROFESSION. HIS BLAMELESS LIFE AND LOVABLE QUALITIES I HAVE TRIED TO DEPICT IN THE CHARACTER OF MR. FRAME IN THIS STORY

INTRODUCTION

SAILS and sailors are rapidly disappearing from the face of the seas. The next generation will know only by heresay what a vessel really should be. Even now most of the "fishermen" are "smoke boats" of various kinds, gasoliners and steamers; and even the schooners at the Boston fish pier are mostly fitted with motors and go to sea even in summer "flat roofed."

The familiar sight of a dozen years ago of a vessel sailing right up to the wharf, dropping her sails, shooting in and tying up, does not happen now twice a year.

No doubt there is economy in motor ships, but they do not breed the self-reliant, resourceful sailors. We are now devolving a lot of what I call wooden men who go to sea in iron ships, instead of the old fashioned iron men who sailed in wooden ships, and the greatest of indoor sports of the forecastle is figuring how much overtime is coming to each man every day.

Captain Smith tells a real story of the genuine old style sailor. He knows whereof he speaks and gives us abundantly of the romance and flavor of the sea.

B. B. CROWNINSHIELD

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GLOSSARY

A-beam: At right angles to the vessel's middle line, or keel.
Adze: A hoe-like edge tool used by ship carpenters.
Avast: The nautical order to stop whatever is being done.

Balanced: When the common center of areas of the sails is nearly in line with the center of the vessel's profile, below the water-line, she is said to be balanced.
Ballooner: The Cape Ann term for a large jib-topsail.
Bank dory: A flaring-sided, flat-bottomed boat, usually fourteen feet long on the bottom, used by fishermen on the fishing banks.
Beam: A heavy timber connecting the two sides of a vessel, on which the deck planks are laid and fastened. It also means breadth: a wide vessel is said to be "beamy."
Beam ends: A vessel is said to be on her beam ends when she has careened until her beams are at right angles to the horizon.
Beam wind: One that comes from a direction at right angles to the vessel's middle line.
Belay: The deep-water order to make a rope fast.
Bend: To knot ropes together. Also, to properly attach a sail to its spars.
Bight: The sailor's word for any loop in rope or in canvas.
Binnacle: The illuminated box in which is kept the mariner's compass.
Boatswain: A petty officer who sees that orders from higher up are executed.
"*Bone in her teeth*": When a vessel is sailing so rapidly as to cause a commotion where her bows enter the water, she is said to have a "bone in her teeth."
Booby-hatch: A cheaply gotten up, box-like covering, with a sliding top, over the main hatch on fishing schooners.
Boom: The spar running along the foot of a fore and aft sail.
Bowsprit: The spar that projects over the forward end of the vessel.
"*Break the anchor out*": The final loosening from mud, rocks, or other entanglement, before weighing.
Breasthook: The crotch piece of timber that unites the bows of a boat or vessel.
Bunt: When canvas is hauled into a bunch, the sailor calls it a "bunt."

Butt: The joint of end woods where two plants meet each other.
"By the wind": Sailing to windward. Close hauled.

Cape Shore: The fisherman's name for the coast from Cape Sable clear through the Gut of Canso to Bay of Chaleur.
Carlings: (important) Pieces of timber in a vessel's deck-frame, connecting two *beams*, and invariably extending in a fore and aft direction. (NOTE — This word is very much misused for beams.)
Ceiling: The vessel's interior plank lining.
Clew: Generally speaking, any corner of a sail, or piece of cloth. But specifically, that corner of a sail nearest the sheet.
Close hauled: When a vessel is steered as near as possible to the direction from which the wind blows, she is "close hauled."
Companionway: The entrance leading below from the deck.
Cross point: A kind of fancy work done by sailors.

Dead-eye: A round, flattish block of lignum vitae wood, having three holes through which a lanyard is reeved to set taut a shroud, or stay.
Doldrums: Calms, or baffling light winds.

"Eat into the wind": A luffing tendency.

Flaw: A sudden gust of wind.
Fore-foot: The corner in a vessel's profile where the stem and keel meet. (NOTE — The spoon-bowed fishing vessel has no fore-foot.)
Fore scuttle: The slide-topped entrance to the forecastle.
"Full and by": Close hauled, but not "laced" or "pinched," the vessel's head being kept sufficiently off from the wind to keep the sails well filled.

Galley: The kitchen aboard ship.
Gantline: (originally *girtline*) A single part, temporary rope reeved through a block for sending men, tools, etc., aloft.
Gasket: A rope that is wound round and round a sail to keep it furled.
Groaner: Sailers' slang for whistling buoy.
Grommet: (pronounced grummet) A ring made by "laying up" a strand of rope or wire, and having a blind ending.
Grub beam: A heavy beam at the break of the deck, that is "grubbed," or rabbeted out, to receive the ends of deck plank.
Gunwale: (pronounced gunnel) The upper wale, or top streak of plank. Hence, the top edge of a boat.
Guy: A steadying brace, or support, made of rope or wire.

Halliard: The rope that hoists a sail.

Hawse pipe: The pipe — usually on a down slant — through which the anchor's cable passes after leaving the windlass.

Head-reach: Slowly to make headway when luffed nearly into the "wind's eye."

Helm: The apparatus by which a ship is steered — commonly used of the tiller or wheel alone.

High line: The man with the best record for catching fish, is said to be "high line."

"*Hove down*": Careened till all but capsized. On beam ends.

"*Hove to*": The after sails eased off and head sails hauled in until little or no headway is made. (NOTE — When "hove to" by stress of weather, a schooner is usually under close reefed fore-sail, only. The easing off has to be nicely adjusted to suit the individual vessel and the condition of wind and sea.)

"*Jam on the wind*": Sailing as close to the wind as possible.

Jib: A triangular sail forward of the fore stay-sail.

Jibe: To turn the vessel around by heading away from the wind instead of luffing up into it.

Jig: A tackle on the other end of a halliard from the hoisting part. It is used for the final tightening.

Jog: Like above, or to ease off sheets until speed is deadened.

Judiquer: A native of the town of Judique on the north shore of Cape Breton.

Jumbo: A comparatively new term for the fore stay-sail. It is used mostly by New England fishermen and probably originated in Gloucester.

Jury mast: A make-shift, or improvised mast.

Kites: Any of the sails on a fishing schooner other than the "four lowers."

Knock-a-bout head rig: Having all the head sails come down abaft the stem head — no bowsprit.

Knot: The sea mile of 6080 feet. The term is derived from the divisions on the log-line that are marked by knots.

"*Lace her*": To haul the sheets extremely taut when by the wind.

Lanyard: Most any short rope used to lash a particular object. Specifically, the tarred hemp rope that sets taut the shrouds and back-stays.

Lazaret: The place, right aft, where boatswain's stores are kept.

Leech: The after edge or any fore and aft sail.

List: To careen.

Luff up: To put the helm down, thus letting the vessel's bow come up towards the wind.

Mast partner: The heavy block filling in a deck frame through which the mast hole is cut.

Oakum: Old tarred hemp, shredded, used for caulking.

Packet: A passenger vessel.
Painter: The rope at the bow of a small boat used to hitch her.
Parceling: Cloth wound around rope to prevent chafing.
Pawl: A ratchet.
Pitch pole: To capsize end over end.
Planking: The outer skin of a wooden boat or vessel, regardless of thickness. For instance: a canoe is often one eighth of an inch thick in its planking.
Port: The left side, looking forward.

Quarter bit: A post of oak, near the stern or quarter, to make ropes fast to.

"*Rap jam full*": About the same as "*full and by.*"
Reeve: To pass a rope through a tackle block.
Right of way tack: When close hauled, the vessel on which the wind is blowing from the starboard side has right of way from the vessel that has it from the port side.
Roach: A hollow, or arch in the outline of a sail. *Never a round, or sweep.* (NOTE — This is a much abused word.)
Rotten-stops: Pieces of weak string. Racing yachts often set head sail, sails and kites, rolled tightly in snake-like form, and rotten-stopped. When ready to use them, a yank on the sheet breaks the strings and the sail is set almost instantaneously.

"*Salted*": When a sein is flaked into the boat it is sprinkled with salt to prevent rot.
Samson post: A large stanchion of oak under the hatchway beams.
Scuppers: Holes in the bulwarks, close to the deck, to let water run off.
Sein boat: A long row boat pointed at both ends.
Sennit: Sailors' braided fancy-work — round, square, or flat.
Shack locker: The New England fisherman's name for the closet where small stores, pies, cakes and dainties are kept.
Shanghaied: Kidnapped, and sent to sea.
Shears: Two spread-out spars, lashed together at their tops, with a tackle hanging for lifting heavy weights.
Sheer: The longitudinal outline — usually curved, and often of much beauty — in a vessel's above water profile.

Sheet: A rope to haul in or slack off the foot of a sail. (NOTE — The sails are not sheets. Aboard of a vessel, a sheet is always a *rope*.)
Sheet eased: Paid out.
Sheeted home: The sails hauled in by their sheets.
Shell-back: An old sailor.
Slip cable: To let all of the cable run out, leaving the anchor on bottom. (A buoy is usually made fast before this is done. The anchor can then be easily recovered.)
Snotter: A becket of rope passing around the mast to hold up the heel of the sprit.
Spinnaker: A kite or light sail, used by racing yachts when running before the wind.
Square away: To start sheets and prepare to sail freer, if not "dead before the wind."
"*Square yards*": The sailor's way of saying: "I will get even with you."
Stand by: Hold yourself in readiness.
Starboard tack: Close hauled with the wind coming from over the starboard bow.
Stay sail: As used by fishermen, this is the huge kite set flying from the main top-mast head, to the fore (lower) mast head, and reaching well down at tack and clew. This is a most efficient sail in moderate weather.
Step: The mortise into which the heel of a mast is stepped.
Storm try-sail: A triangular sail set on the main mast of fishing schooners. (Sometimes called riding sail.)
Sweep: An extra long oar.
Swifter: Any one member of a set of shrouds.

Tabling: The nautical term for the wide hem at the border of a sail.
Tackle: (a as in take) A purchase made by reeving a rope through blocks containing sheaves, or edge-grooved wheels.
Tarpaulin: A canvas cover, generally tarred; hence the name.
Thwarts: The crosswise seats in row boats.
Trick: The sailor's turn at steering.
"*Twine*": The seiner's synonym for net.

Veer: To shift in direction as: The wind veered. The vessel veered while at anchor.

Wake: The track of disturbed water astern of a moving vessel.
"*Wet his salt*": Money enough — retired.
Wier: A fish trap, or pound.

Yawl boat: A large, heavily built, row boat such as coasting schooners carry at their stern davits.

GUS HARVEY

THE BOY SKIPPER OF CAPE ANN

Chapter I

TO THE EAST'ARD

THE jagged skyline of Manhattan and the blue hills of Staten Island were sinking into the distance as the schooner *Maine Girl*, Gloucester, drove down the bay. At the taffrail Gus Harvey watched with mingled emotions the familiar outlines fade into the horizon — perhaps with a tinge of sadness.

He was thoughtful for a moment, but brightened perceptibly as a huge hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Ay, lad" declared Captain McKenzie, in a deep hearty voice, "ay, you're leaving New York, to be sure, but you're going to one of the loveliest spots on this planet!"

Gus, a small boy for fifteen, looked up at the bronzed face of the giant skipper with a smile of deep affection.

"Yes, Cap'n," he said, "it must be fine down at your place, and you don't know how I want to see it! I've been looking forward so long for this trip, I c'n hardly believe I'm here. It's going to be great!"

"Haw, haw, haw!" guffawed the skipper, planting his great bulk on the quarter-bit. "Just hear the boy talk! think you'll like it, do you?"

"Sure thing," came with the candor true to boydom.

"Well, the next time you spy the skyscrapers of Manhattan, you'll be homesick for Cape Ann. Won't he Murdock?"

Murdock McLain, the seine-heaver, gave a look up and down the luff of the huge ballooner, and then stumped aft to where the Captain and Gus were sitting.

"My idea exactly, Archie; 'n' the only sight he'll hunger for in after years 'll be Eastern P'int looming up when he's bound in to Gloucester."

"What!" bellowed the skipper. "He'll never fish while Archie McKenzie's alive— that is if he cares to get into anything that's better! But let her come up, Murdock. Keep her east by no'the 'n' call me when we're off Fire Island."

The Cape crew soon had the sails sheeted home and the crack schooner, with her scuppers awash, settled herself for a clip of speed which, to the city boy, seemed truly wonderful. He stood on the weather quarter, shaded his eyes, and gazed silently at the sea picture around him— the towering masts, the gracefully curving sides, the crooked sheer that ended one hundred and thirty feet away in the modern knockabout headrig.

"Gee, but she can fly!" Gus exclaimed. "Can't she, Mr. McLain?"

"Nothing swifter," answered the seine-heaver, after a glance alow and aloft and at the man at the wheel. "She's never been beaten. But there's a new Portugee out o' Provincetown that they say is a wonder. I heard her skipper offer to buy Archie a new hat, if we outsail him. We're all hands just itching to get in company with that vessel."

"I hope the *Maine Girl* wins!"

"She sure will, 'n' the man who'll make her do it 's Archibald Cameron McKenzie!"

At this outburst from the loyal seine-heaver, Gus went forward to have a chat with his crony, Si Pepper, the cook, whom all hands called "Doctor."

McLain was well justified in holding his old friend in such high esteem for Captain McKenzie was known from the Capes of Virginia to the Cape Shore as the "Mackerel King" and the "Killer." He had been high line for years and was a famous racing skipper. "Big Archie," as he was affectionately called by his friends, was one of those magnificent specimens of Cape Breton men, not at all uncommon in the cosmopolitan city of Gloucester. Many like him may be seen at any time near the upper end of Duncan Street or in the rooms of the Master Mariners' Society.

Under Murdock's skillful handling the good schooner reeled off the knots that afternoon in lively fashion. Down in the forecastle — the forecastle and galley are one in a fisherman— Gus sat eating doughnuts at the long table. They were hot ones, fresh from the pan, and Si kept him well supplied as they chatted.

"Let's see," said the cook. "We've been acquainted four years now, haven't we?"

"Yes, and didn't it seem long waiting for spring to come each year? The fellows used to say all I talked about was the southern seining fleet and the coming of the *Maine Girl!*"

"This year," Gus continued with an effort, "I thought spring would never come. You knew mother and father were killed on the Elevated last October?"

"Yes, Gus, All hands know that." Then, with rare tact, the kind-hearted cook opened the shack-locker and said, abruptly:

"Did you ever see puttier strawberry shortcakes?"

"I'm sure I never did, and they're beauts! But say, Silas" said the boy still reminiscent "you don't know how good the Captain has been to me all through my trouble."

"Perhaps I don't but I happen to know a whole lot though. He told me a long time ago that he had adopted you; that when we got to New York your school would be nearly over and he'd take you away from the boarding-house and have you live at his home."

"But *here's* something you don't know, Si: I was adopted twice before— the Harveys were not my real parents!

"When I was very small, I lived with a Mrs. Mueller who was so kind to me that I never doubted but she was my mother. It must have been hard sledding for her, though, because her husband seldom sent home any money. He was away so much that I don't remember him at all. When I was seven, I was taken from Mother Mueller, in spite of her saying that she had adopted me. The officers claimed I was in bad surroundings— Mr. Mueller had just been caught and sent to prison for some crime committed years before— so I went to the orphans' home where Pa and Ma Harvey got me.

"It'll be no cinch, Si, because Mrs. Mueller is dead, but I'm going to find out who I am if it takes fifty years!"

"That's right, Gus. You've got grit and I feel sure you'll win out!"

"Yes, I think I shall," resumed Gus. "But say, didn't Pa and the Cap'n think a lot of each other?"

"Yes, I believe they were shipmates when they used to go deep water."

"You're right, Si, and they were roommates, too. The Cap'n was a bo's'n then, and Pa went sailmaker."

After his fill of doughnuts, the boy went aft again.

"Let me take her Mr. McLain?"

"What, do you think you c'n sail her?"

"Sure thing! It ought to be dead easy! Why, I've heard the Cap'n say she's perfectly balanced."

"Ha! ha! ha! Well, give it a try then. The course is east by no'the, but I don't believe you c'n steer by compass."

"East by no'the," repeated Gus, as he grasped the spokes of the great iron wheel.

Murdock, and the man whose trick it was, watched things narrowly for five minutes, when the former exclaimed, vehemently:

"I knew you'd learned the name of every rope on the vessel, but sink me, if I thought you'd know how to sail her! Where'd you learn it anyhow?"

"Oh, I picked part of it up in Jim Watson's catboat down in Gravesend Bay. Jim was Pa's clerk, you know. Pa was a wharfinger. I used to borrow the yawl boats, too, from the captains of the schooners that laid at the wharf. I sailed a lot in the North River."

"Well, all I c'n say is, you steer like a shellback! You use hardly a spoke, you've kept her on the course, and the wake's been as a straight as an arrow!"

Fire Island Light was abeam shortly after supper and the captain was called. He jogged her, standing off and on, with the masthead man aloft, but they only met a few seiners.

"It's going to be a nice dark night, Murdock," remarked the skipper, "and I'll go 'up stairs' myself directly, but I'm almost certain the fish are to be struck off No Man's. So, if we don't raise a school before ten o'clock, we'll put her on the road again."

The captain and Murdock stumped the weather alley together while waiting for darkness to set in and the latter mentioned the boy's skillful steering.

"Oh, ay," said the skipper, "I'm not surprised. Harvey often told me that Gus could sail a yacht as well as he could. Why, that boy could make all the knots, splices, and bends— yes, and even crosspoint and make fancy sennit— when he was only ten years old! But what's more, he's a good boy, and I'm very much attached to him."

"Yes, Archie, we know he's good. All hands, 'specially Si, think the world of him."

By this time darkness had shut in and the skipper went aloft. His keen eyes were ever on the lookout for a phosphorescent ripple, and when McLain sang out, "It's ten, Archie," and no school of mackerel had been sighted, there came from the masthead the stentorian bellow:

"Square away 'n' steer east-no'the-east. The wind's t' the west'ard now 'n' Newport's the next market. We'll be off No Man's in the morning."

Chapter II

THE FIRST SET

"SCHOOL O!" were the words that greeted his ears when Gus stuck his head out of the companionway the next morning.

"Where away?" bellowed the big skipper, standing near the wheel in sea boots, blue Guernsey and sou'wester.

"'Bout a mile on the lee bow."

"All right. Stay up there. Bill, give her a rap-jam full. Tom, jump into your engine-room and— drive her."

The schooner had gone round during the early morning hours, and as the wind was due east she was closehauled on the starboard tack. It was not many minutes before the engine was stopped and the masthead man sang out directions.

"Now's the chance, skipper. Better let her come to. There they school — a raft on 'em!"

"All right! Let go jib and jumbo halliards. Get the boat alongside. Ease the foresheet. That'll do. Away with the dory, you dorymen. Jump in the boat — we're off!"

Sharp and clear came the orders from the giant skipper — absolute master of the situation. Then the lad saw a race. The dory got away first; for there were only two to go in her, and they were moving like mad for the school which was churning the water like a tide-rip about a quarter of a mile on the lee bow.

As the lad looked, the school seemed suddenly to grow in size. It was a veritable raft, and the man left in charge of the schooner, Dosithe Le Blanc, called Doss for short, said:

"Dey'll have to cut a corner off dem fish. Why, my boy, dere's more'n five tousan' barrel dere! But give us a pull in on dat foresheet. Come on, Doctor, dat's it, make him fas'. I'll slack off de mains'l, and we'll give him de jib, trim' to wind'ard."

Gus was so busy helping Doss and the cook get the vessel under command, that he lost some of the race, but it must have been close, for, when he got a chance to look, the cork-heaver was heaving the buoy towards the dory. Then at a yell from the huge skipper who stood with an immense steering oar in his hands the seine-boat shot ahead driven by nine stalwart fellows rowing double banked— two on a thwart except the bow oarsman.

Straight for the mass of fish went the boat, not for the middle of the mammoth school but just so as to cut off one corner of it for the prudent skipper would not let greed lead him on to the loss of both fish and net.

The oars bent! The skipper swayed in time to the stroke! And the big seine-heaver heaved the twine aided by the cork-heaver.

Now they were through the darting, leaping mass bunched so closely that the water was a bluish black. Then, with the big skipper urging them on and on the boat swung under the impulse of his great sweep and made the curve that put them on the home stretch.

The dory was waiting and when the seine-boat was four or five lengths away, started to meet the larger craft, rowed by Bill, a freckle-faced overgrown young

THE MAINE GIRL

fellow, as Long Jim, the Judiquer, paid out the line. The boat and the dory met. The purse-line was passed, and then came the heaving up with the winch. After the very hardest kind of labor, the huge bag had all the fish confined, and some one exclaimed:

"Skates and dogfish! If there hain't Single Reef and Short Scope!"

As the men glanced from their work, they saw not only the *Maine Girl*, being skillfully shot up alongside, but the *Delia I. Matheson* and the *Racine*, Gloucester vessels, commanded by Captain McKenzie's best friends. The three skippers saw at once that the struggling mass must be handled with care, and that there were more fish than any two vessels could ever handle. So, as the *Matheson* was a little sooner on the scene, Captain McKenzie bellowed,

"I'll take what I want and leave my boat and twine, Charlie."

The boat was made fast to the swinging boom by the fore-rigging, the large dip-net set to work, and the flopping beauties— some Extras and Number 1's, and countless 2's and 3's— were bailed out.

When it was estimated that they had about four hundred barrels piled on deck, the *Matheson's* boat with her seine— all made up and salted— was brought over and made fast astern. Then Captain McKenzie ordered the engineer to give the schooner a kick ahead out of the way.

As the *Maine Girl* shot ahead, the *Matheson* took her place alongside the boat and net which showed no apparent diminution in the quantity of fish it held.

Meanwhile the *Racine* was jogging with head sails sheeted to windward, waiting her turn at the impounded

fish, and as the *Maine Girl* swept by on her run in, there was an exchange of cheers from all three vessels.

Gus had "mugged up," while the men were at work, and, as they had had no breakfast, he insisted he could steer her while they all went to one sitting. He was a proud boy there on the broad expanse of ocean in control of the movements of a vessel of one hundred and sixty tons!

But the skipper reappeared shortly and ordered,

"Go below 'n' eat hearty 'n' give the ship a good name."

Gus took the captain at his word and, when he had finished eating, would have given the ship an extra good name. Si kept him interested until noontime relating anecdotes of the skipper.

"You ought to have been with us last trip," said Silas. "Why, we pursed the vessel in!"

"What do you mean?" asked Gus.

"Well, 'twas like this. They'd made a set and missed 'em and they were alongside and had just got the seine flaked and salted and into the boat again, when I hove some stuff over the side. Amongst it was a lot of salt herring that had gone rusty. The skipper was standing just at the break o' the deck when some one yelled, 'Great Scot, look at that school! They're touching her bow! What a shame! The vessel's in the way!'

"Now our skipper's a man quick to decide and his decisions are nearly always right, too. He see them fish and he makes up his mind to have 'em, so he hollers, 'Into the boat. We'll purse the schooner in!' They rowed clean around the vessel and met again, and after the running line was hauled, he had the engine turned just right to house the two-blade wheel, and sailed the

Maine Girl right over the corks! Wha' der yer know 'bout that?"

"I think," declared Gus, thoughtfully, "that he's just the biggest he-man I ever met."

"You're sure right, sonny," said the cook.

When Gus went aft, the skipper was standing by with his sextant, and presently he pronounced it noon. The *Maine Girl* was romping along with all kites on her and as the captain and Gus sat on the weather quarter that afternoon, the boy said:

"Why can't you teach me about navigating? I'm not too young!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Hear the boy talk! Well I never—but sink me, if I don't!"

"Oh, that'll be bully!" exclaimed Gus. "You see, I want to learn everything about the profession."

"Well, of all the boys!" was the skipper's comment.

Chapter III

FROM OFF CHATHAM

"DON'T you ever get discouraged, Cap'n?" queried Gus, one morning a week later.

"No," answered the frank-visaged mariner, with a laugh that carried as far as Monomoy. "They tell me I'm an optimist."

They had just passed Shovelfull Lightship and the *Maine Girl* fanned along lazily over the smooth water.

"Gee, but nearly all the crack large schooners are refitting to go to the Cape Shore! We only made two hauls off No Man's. I should think you'd worry — you've been high line so long."

"What we've done's not too bad, son. We ran two good fares into Newport. Then, too, I've been studying things, late years. I find that the fish are as likely to school quite near land in our waters as they are off the Cape Shore. P'rhaps we'll make a set to-night; a dark night's the time for mackerel!"

"But I have so much fun sailing all day, that I sleep like a log at night!" Gus protested.

The faint southwest breeze soon failed completely, the powerful auxiliary was started, and the good vessel churned her way along to a point broad off Chatham. The anchor was let go, and, with a lookout aloft, all hands relaxed into a state of blissful idleness.

Gus found a most famous whittler forward — Long Jim, the Judiquer. The pair sat on deck under the

shade of the unfurled jumbo, with their backs against the windlass bits, and the boy was soon introduced into the mystery of cutting a chain cable out of a single stick of pine.

The day, the most summerlike of the season, passed at length into night; a night as dark as the day had been dazzling. The calm continued until well on towards morning.

When Gus awoke at five o'clock, he was instantly aware that the vessel was sailing. Jumping from his bunk in the sycamore- and gum-finished cabin, he quickly made his way on deck.

"Where are we off to now?" he asked.

"We're bound in to Boston with a record haul— a raft of 'em!" chuckled the captain. "But go for'ard to Si 'n' mug up; then come aft 'n' see the old girl waltz."

Gus soon returned and planted himself on a gasoline drum by the side of the skipper. From their perch on the starboard quarter the sight was a noble one. With every rag set, even to staysail and ballooner, the *Maine Girl* romped along close-hauled, making the spray fly like silver jets in the morning air as the wave crests broke at the forerigging.

"My, but Cape Cod's a dreary old shore, isn't it?" cried Gus, pointing to the endless sand dunes to leeward.

"Ay, and a wicked one when the wind's this way 'n' blowing a gale in winter."

After breakfast the lighthouse towers of Chatham and Nauset were well on the port quarter. The *Maine Girl* romped steadily along until clear of Peaked Hill Bar, when the sheets were started and she fairly leaped on her way to Boston.

As Race Point opened up, a shout rang out from a dozen throats forward:

"Sail O."

All eyes were straining to see what sort of a craft it was, but Captain McKenzie had the gift of identifying a vessel when at a great distance. The sighted craft was well clear of the land and laying a course for Light House Channel — the nearest entrance to Boston Harbor.

"That's the new Portugee schooner— the *Esperanza*," declared the skipper. "She's been down with the netters in Cape Cod Bay and she's running a fare into Boston.

"Joe Silva's a good fellow, but he promised to tow the *Maine Girl* the first time we met or buy me a new hat. I want to wear that bonnet!"

"But vat if dem feller turn on de juice?" asked Doss, the Frenchman. "He vat you call auxiliary— him?"

"The Portugese are an honest lot," averred the skipper. "Besides, Joe and I made a gentleman's agreement to use sail only."

"But how in the world can you tell what vessel it is at such a distance?" asked Gus.

"Oh, that's just a faculty, partly natural and partly acquired," the captain answered.

The new schooner had a good start and, as she was every bit as large as the *Maine Girl*, the chances of overtaking her did not look encouraging. "A stern chase is a long chase!"

"Looks as though we'd met our match, Cap'n, doesn't it?" said Long Tom at the wheel.

"I've yet to see the schooner that wears canvas that can show her heels to this wagon," was the reply, "When I do— Wetmore'll build me another!"

"But we're gaining, if ever so little," said Gus, "for

I c'n make out things aboard of her much more clearly than I could a while ago."

"You're right, son; but we'll have all we c'n do to pass her before we get in, for, you must remember, she's just climbing as well as we."

The wind had been increasing for the past hour, and had it not been for the fact that it was a race, the kites would have been taken in on both vessels. But Captain McKenzie wanted the *Maine Girl* to remain invincible, and undoubtedly the Portuguese skipper was glad of such a chance to try conclusions with the pride of Cape Ann. Naturally he would crack on as long as his rival would. Besides, if he got in first, he would get a larger price for his fare.

Along they tore through the water, their lee sides buried rails under and smothered in foam. It was almost nip and tuck between them, with the older vessel gaining, but so slowly that it was hardly perceptable. Had they been jam on the wind, the new craft would have been overtaken much more rapidly, for no vessel can sail well to windward with new sails.

"Hurrah!" Gus shouted at last. "I can read her name, E–S–P–E–R–A–N–Z–A, P–R–O–V–I–N–C–E–T–O–W–N. We'll pass her in twenty minutes or half an hour!"

The new flier was now nearly abreast of Point Allerton and Captain McKenzie ordered:

"Lift her a little— jog her. I wouldn't pass them at just this moment, if I could."

"Why not?" came the question.

"Well, you see, to be successful, one must often use strategy. We've proved that we are faster with a beam wind, but we don't know whether we could hold her

running almost before it. I'll never let that chap get alongside T Wharf before we do, if I can help it. She'll square away now at any minute. When she does, I'll keep right on and cut through the Hypocrite. That'll make less distance to go, and, as it's an hour and a half ebb now, we'll avoid the strong head tide that the other vessel'll have to contend with, to say nothing of all the tows and other shipping she'll most likely have to dodge when going through the Narrows."

The skipper had hardly finished, when the shout went up:

"They've squared away!"

But Captain McKenzie kept on his course and, shortly, gradually had his sheets eased until he stood boldly in for the Hypocrite Channel. It seemed almost no time before they were through the passage and were tearing up Broad Sound like a race horse. The crew were keenly anxious, all but the coolheaded skipper who knew he would gain immensely by separating from his antagonist. All eyes, save those of the man at the wheel, were turned to the southward, watching that suit of new canvas nearly up to the Centurion.

"I'm afeared she's got us, skipper," said Bill.

"Just wait 'n' see," was the reply. "She's flattenin' in her sheets now to stand up the Narrows, and here we are abreast of Faun Bar. You'll see very shortly who's ahead."

Presently the *Maine Girl* struck a clip of steamboat speed. The wind had been blowing extremely hard, but now it came with a force which seemed to Gus like a young gale. The *Maine Girl* sped onward, now with bow lifting as if to rise on a long surge; then to plunge on, and on . . .

"Good thing we've got good gear aloft," declared Murdock.

"Ay," agreed the skipper, "and I picked out those topmasts myself. They're noble sticks. But say, you Bill, who's got us now? Here we're off Nix's Mate; where's your Portugee?"

Sure enough, the *Esperanza* was only just off the wharf on Lovell's Island, bucking a strong tide and nearly close-hauled, while the *Maine Girl* was leaping along with the wind on her quarter.

"Gus," asked the skipper, "would you like to see how Cape Ann men dock a vessel?"

"Yes, sir; I sure would."

"Well, barring accidents, that *Esperanza* is past history; but I should like to say I was moored and all furled up before she got to the wharf, and I mean to do it. If you watch, you'll see how a crew of live men move around!"

They were soon up to the Castle and abreast of Buoy 9, where it seemed to Gus that there should be some sign of taking in sail, but not a word was said nor an order given. The schooner tore on through the water, with the captain at the wheel. They were nearly abreast of the wharf, when the skipper let out a yell that could be heard up in Dock Square:

"Stand by."

The *Maine Girl* shot into the wind with every stitch of cloth set. When she was fairly in the wind's eye, down came the staysail and ballooner, and at the same time the topsails were clewed up and the huge mainsail lowered. The helm was put hard up and with good headway she turned on her heel and made for the wharf under jib, jumbo and foresail. Before she reached the

pier, the foresail was hauled flat aft, and at a nod from the skipper the three sails came down on the run with plenty of men on the downhauls.

As the schooner sped into the dock, lines were heaved to the idlers and fish buyers on the pier-end and the schooner was snubbed to make her lose her headway. The sails were furled with the exception of the staysail, which was left in the seine boat that had been hoisted into the waist when starting for market.

"Now then, you fellows on the wharf, how far up is the new schooner with the white sails?" asked the captain.

"She's about abreast of the powder boats," came the answer.

"So now, Gus, you and Bill, too, can see what a good crew of *live* men and a little *strategy* can do when it comes to sailing a schooner!"

Chapter IV

OLD MOTHER ANN

"WHAT are you going to do this afternoon, Gus?" asked Mrs. McKenzie, as they rose from the dinner table.

"Bat Wonson and I are going somewhere. Gee, I'm glad the Cap'n sent for him before rejoining the vessel! Bat's a corking fellow!"

"Yes, Bartley is a pretty good boy and he ought to be able to find fun enough for you both. There's only one out about him that I know of— he's a little noisy at times."

So Gus left Snug Harbor cottage behind him and walked over the Rocky Neck Causeway to East Gloucester. Just as he reached his destination, Bat came out of the house.

"Where sh'll we go, Gus?" he asked.

"I dunno; it's up to you."

"Wha'd you say to a hike down to Eastern P'int 'n' Old Mother Ann?"

"That's the stuff! It'll be great!"

"Come on, then, but say, let's take our fish rods."

"All right. I'll skip back to Snug Harbor 'n' get mine."

"No you needn't, I've got two."

So the pair trudged along the shore road past the many cottages, the summer hotels and the artists' studios.

"Gee, but it's pretty here!" exclaimed Gus, as the

winding way led up a slight hill where high shade trees overhung the sidewalk.

"You bet," said Bat, who was proud of his native place. "Just look, every house we've passed was almost hidden with leaves and flowers!"

"It's some different from the East Side!"

The road went winding down a short steep hill and on by a long stretch of shady bathing beach. Far across the wide lower harbor were Fresh Water Cove and Magnolia on the rockbound western shore.

"Well," said Bat presently, "after you get through rubbering across to Norman's Woe, we'll take that road on the port hand 'n' climb the hill. We'll come out by the ocean side at Brace's Cove."

At the top of the hill Gus stopped and exclaimed: "There's the ocean!"

"Yes, and over there, no'the-east of us, are Thatcher's twin lights. See 'em?"

"Sure thing! I've often heard the Cap'n tell about 'em."

"And, if it were a bit clearer," added Bat, "you could see the Londoner. It's close outside of it 'n' marked with a spindle."

The road ran down towards the sea through pasture-land, where the granite ledge showed bare in spots, with here and there wild rose, sweet fern and bay-berry bushes, and they soon came to a place where there was fresh water on the right, and, on the left, the salt sea.

"Oh, what lilies!" exclaimed Gus. "Is that Niles's pond?"

"Niles's pond is right. That's where we go skating 'n' iceboating in winter. It's some pond!"

"But where's Mother Ann?"

"Oh, just this side of Eastern Point Light. Come on."

They soon came in sight of the rockbound Eastern Point with its lighthouse and Dog Bar Breakwater jutting well into the harbor's mouth beyond. Here Bat pointed to a particularly grim old boulder, a part of the solid promontory of rock, almost in the shadow of the lighthouse, and said:

"There— that's the old girl herself!"

Gus looked blank for a moment and then it came to him.

"I can make her out!" he cried. "It's exactly like the side view of an old woman. Now I can say I've seen 'Old Mother Ann'."

"Well, now you've seen the old lady, wha'd you say? Shall we fish here for cunners 'n' tautog or try our luck on the breakwater?"

"As this is a shore cruise, why not try our luck in the pond? I've never fished in fresh water!"

"The pond it is, then," agreed Bat. "We'll dig some worms in the light-keeper's garden. I know him."

As they approached the pond the shore was soft and swampy and Bat warned his friend:

"Look out! This is almost quick-mud!"

"I should say it was," Gus agreed.

"Just take one of these planks that the fellows have scattered around to stand on and we'll go over to the left a little way. That's a bully place! I've caught lots of pickerel and hornpout at that old spot!"

"Say, listen," Bat went on, "I think it's the fellows coming for a fresh water swim. D' you hear 'em?"

Before Gus could answer a group of boys came through the alder bushes, and, standing on boards and planks, proceeded to undress and hang their clothes on the branches.

They had hardly begun, however, when one — a very fat boy — sang out:

"Gee, fellows, there's Bat! Heigh, Bat! Fishing?"

"Yep."

"Come on in, the water's great!"

"All right, Lumpy, if Gus will," Bat replied.

"Anyway, come over here a minute."

"Who's the gink?" asked the fat boy, when Bat had joined him.

"He's Gus Harvey, 'n' he's A 1 'n' copper-fastened," declared Bat, as the crowd gathered closer.

"But he's a runt!" protested a rather large fellow called Bing.

"Is that so?" challenged Bat. "But I bet he c'n come across with the goods though. You ought to ha' seen him spunk up to Tim Rafferty when we were in line for our tickets at the pictures yesterday!"

"Hey?" came in a chorus. Their curiosity was whetted.

"You all know," Bat went on, "that Tim's the boss of the Union Hillers 'n' the Vincent's Cove gang — he's the biggest bully over in town. When he tried to push Gus out of his place in the line, there sure would've been something doing, if Turkey Red, the special, hadn't threatened to lug 'em both up to the cop station."

"But you don't mean to say Tim stood for it!" exclaimed Lumpy.

"N-o — he swore at Gus and said, 'I'll get even with you yet, Bantam!'"

"Fetch 'im along," was the unanimous verdict, and Gus was soon undressing with the "fellows."

"Can you swim?" asked Lumpy.

"Uh-huh," was the reply, "I could swim when I was eight. I learned down at Coney."

"Coney? Where in thunder's that?"

"Don't you know? It's near New York. Coney Island's the finest pleasure beach in the country!"

They were all in the water with the exception of a tall boy called "Scoop" who was busily engaged in building a raft. He took a couple of old logs, placed them five or six feet apart, and then laid short pieces of planks and joists across with a few longer planks lengthwise. When the raft was finished the builder pushed it into the water a little way and then the rest of the crowd clambered on and took jumps and dives. In the excitement no one noticed that Scoop always kept a good hold on the raft, and that, although he made his legs move like a swimmer, he never swam around or took part in the stunts with the others.

"Why don't you try a race with us, Scoop?" asked one of the boys, but no one took time to notice the answer.

As the boys raced down the pond, Gus in second place, struck his ankle on an old stump and sang out:

"I've hurt my foot on something! I'll have to dress when we get back."

As Gus stood on a board on the swamp bank and reached for his clothes, he noticed Scoop on the raft which was now so loosened that it was near the point of going to pieces. Gus kept his eyes on the raft as he started to dress, but he found that some would-be joker had played the usual trick of tying knots in his clothes. When the knots in his shirt were loosened and the shirt half way on, he heard a cry:

"Help! Help!"

Now Gus's back was wet and the thin garment stuck, but through the gauze he could see distinctly bubbles on the surface of the water and scattered in all direc-

tions the wreckage of what a moment before had been a raft.

Up came the drowning boy. Gus strained at the shirt, trying first to take it off, then to haul it on. It would not go either way. But when the bubbles rose for the third and last time, Gus gave a furious tug and the shirt ripped in halves. He leaped towards the bubbles. He gripped a plank with one hand and with the other reached under the water as far as he could. At last he clutched the drowning boy's hair. His fingers slipped and he felt that he could not stay under himself any longer.

"I must save him," Gus thought, as he reached down and got a firm hold on one ear. With a mighty effort he raised the drowning boy, who immediately tried to hug his rescuer. Then the forethought of hanging on to the buoyant plank came into play.

The rest of the swimmers had now reached the scene of the struggle. Gus with his head above the surface where he could breathe, felt somewhat stronger and, though hindered by the drowning boy's frantic death-hug, managed to raise his head, too. Gus soon reached the shore, but he never gave up his grasp on the faithful plank until the others had relieved him of all further care.

"Rouse 'em both out on to these boards," ordered Bat.

"Here, some of you," bellowed Lumpy, "stand by to roll Scoop, on this ball of clothes."

As he spoke, Lumpy took all the clothing within reach, hastily made a wad of it, on which they rolled Scoop, face downward. Then Lumpy ordered him stretched out on his back, his arms worked backward

and forward, while Lumpy himself held the tongue out at one side of his mouth and watched his chest to see if he had started to breathe.

While Lumpy and a squad of boys worked over Scoop, Bat and some of the others watched over Gus, who, although breathing, was unconscious. But he soon opened his eyes and asked:

"Where am I?"

Lumpy's efforts were soon rewarded and he yelled,

"Keep it up, boys; keep it up! Hurrah! He breathes; he's coming to!"

It was fifteen minutes before Gus was strong enough to dress, but Scoop had to be carried out through the alder bushes to a sunny spot where they laid him on the ground and covered him with clothing.

As they sat around making alder whistles with their jack knives, Scoop tried to say something but was interrupted by Lumpy:

"Not a word, Scoop; you keep perfectly still for a while, until you feel stronger. I'm the doctor in this scrape."

So they whittled and as they did so Bat remarked:

"Gee, Gus, I noticed something red on your left arm when you were peeled off for swimming! It looked as though you'd had a bad burn at some time, and there was a brown mole just above it. You'll never find it hard to prove who you are with all that trade-mark on you!"

Gus colored slightly but was not obliged to explain for Lumpy broke in with:

"Say, Bat, Gus and you and I ought to be pretty good friends seeing as our fathers are so thick."

"Yes," Bat replied, "and I heard a man over in town

say that there are no finer men out o' Gloucester than the 'Big Three.' You know that's what every one calls them."

"They sure are a whole team! Their names'd tell a fellow that. 'Big Archie,' 'Single Reef Charlie,' and 'Short Scope'— just think! I'd give most anything to be sure that I was going to be as famous as they are!"

"How do you feel now, Scoop?" asked the self-appointed physician.

"I think I could dress and go home," was the reply.

"All right. Make a try."

But it was a very weak Scoop who walked slowly along leaning on the shoulders of two of the others. Yet he had strength enough to shout, as Gus left them:

"Gus, you're a brick!"

Chapter V

THE MARINE RAILWAY

"DO you know where Finley Archer's boat shop is?" asked Mrs. McKenzie.

"Yes 'm," answered Gus. "It's on the marsh at the end of the Causeway."

"Well, you go over there at half-past nine and tell Mr. Archer who you are. I think he has something to show you."

"Something to show me?" exclaimed Gus, obviously perplexed.

"Yes, I think so."

For the life of him Gus could not think what business the yacht builder could possibly have with him, but at the appointed time he entered the boat-shop.

The spring rush of fitting out was not over and several mechanics and yacht skippers were scraping spars at the benches, while a solitary worker was reeving off a new painter through the ring bolt of a thirteen-foot row and sailboat.

Gus was instinctively drawn to the fresh painted boat resting on horses or trestles, and he proceeded to question the man working on her.

"That boat can sail pretty well, can't she, sir?"

"I believe she can," said the man, with a smile, as he glanced at his watch and his questioner. "But what's your name, sonny?"

"Gus Harvey. Who owns that boat? She's a peach!"

"Like her, do you? What do you like about her?"

"Why," said Gus, "she's got the general outline and beauty of a Whitehall, with the beam and weatherly qualities of an out and out sailer."

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed Archer. "Now you've unconsciously repeated exactly what the former owner described to me when he ordered the boat built a few years ago. But you'd like to know who owns her, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sonny, as nigh as I c'n make out, you do. Cap'n McKenzie sent her here to be painted, 'n' told me to turn her over to you as soon as the paint got hard."

Gus stepped back a few paces, shaded his eyes with his hand and took in anew every fine point of his gift. He was nearly overwhelmed.

The men carried the boat down the marsh and placed her in the water, as Mr. Archer explained about her rig.

"This is her small sail 'n' you'd better use it for a few days till you get used to her. The large one's in the Cap'n's boat-house at Snug Harbor. But if I were you, I'd never go outside Dog Bar Breakwater with either sail— it's not safe to go outside in an open boat!"

Gus cruised about the cove and upper harbor, skirting the ends of the wharves and observing the bustle and activity everywhere. The merry ring of the caulker's mallet could be heard at Snug Harbor at the head of the Cove, but down near the Rocky Neck Ferry landing, it was music indeed. There were one or two vessels hauled out on the railways, so Gus decided to land and watch the gang of caulkers, carpenters and painters preparing them for sea.

As he was asking questions about the whys and

wherefores, the proprietor of the yard came along. Mr. Frame was a short, stout old man with a florid complexion. His head was enormous, and his face, with the merry twinkle of the half shut eyes and lids hanging like great bags, reminded Gus for all the world of the picture of General Benjamin F. Butler that hung in the hall at Snug Harbor.

The jolly old man listened to the boy's questions for a minute and then slapping him on the back:

"You'll do!" he exclaimed. "You're all right, my son! Wouldn't you like to see the models in my office?"

"Very much, sir."

"Come on, then. But what's your name and where do you live? I haven't seen you around here before!"

"My name's Augustus Harvey, but nearly every one calls me Gus. I live at Cap'n McKenzie's— Snug Harbor cottage."

"Well, now that I know you're one of Cap'n McKenzie's family, you're welcome any time. But here we are."

The office, upstairs over the shop, was covered with models and blue-prints showing the lines of vessels.

"Well, how do you like it up here?" asked the builder.

"It's very interesting, for making models is one of my hobbies. I've made a whole lot and the Cap'n says they're good shape. I've put a square-rigger in a bottle several times. Father taught me the trick. But what I've always wanted to know is about a ship's lines and how to use 'em."

"Haw! haw! haw!" exploded the merry old man. "You're pretty young, but I'll show you something about it."

Mr. Frame took a model made of lifts or layers so

that it could be taken apart, and showed Gus how to go through a process by tracing outlines of the model and how to get the shape of the body from them.

Gus was quick to learn and his new friend said:

"You must come and see me often, for I can teach you something 'most any day."

"That'll be fine, but perhaps I'll bother you."

"Not at all; if I'm too busy I'll tell you so."

As they went down on the wharf, Gus exclaimed:

"How nicely that man trims the keel with an adze! Would it take me long to learn to use one?"

"Yes, it would take some time, but if you'll practise every morning for fifteen minutes or a half hour, I'll make you a present of a small adze. I'll have our band sawyer grind and whet it up, so you can have it the next time you come."

"You're very kind sir," said Gus, as he stepped aboard his new craft.

When nearing the pier at Snug Harbor, Gus spied Lumpy McMillan coming down to meet him and shouted,

"How's this for a breeze?"

"It's all right, Gus! But isn't she a pippin?"

"Be careful to step in the middle when you get in, you're pretty heavy, you know!"

"Oh, I can move around just like a cat, if I am fat," said Lumpy, with the utmost good nature.

"We'd better wait for Bat," suggested Gus.

"No need of it. He told me he had to go over to Lanesville."

"Well, we'll have a sail just the same. Shove off."

"Ay, ay."

Gus hauled in the sheet, caught a turn around the pin on the under side of the gunwale, using a jam hitch,

but made with a small bight, and placed the loose part of the rope across his knee, so that if he heeled over suddenly one yank or twitch would cast it adrift.

They were off, but the skipper soon asked:

"Would you like to steer, Lumpy?"

"Oh, no! I'm too heavy to sit aft; I'd spoil her trim; she'd go 'way down by the stern. I always go as crew. They have a 'mosquito class' for open boats thirteen feet and under down at the Yacht Club."

"I suppose they'd let us race. I'd like to sail this boat in their races and see what she'd do," declared the skipper.

"You c'n sail in the races, all right, for Cap'n McKenzie's one of the charter members. All you have to do is to walk over after supper and enter her for the season. The first race is to come off Saturday afternoon and there'll be one nearly every Saturday until Labor Day."

"How many can go in a boat?"

"Oh, the rules are simple. Two men in a boat, and mainsail only — no jibs or light sails."

"But do you think this craft would stand a show?" Gus asked.

"Yes, I do, although they've got some pretty fast 'skeeters' and know how to sail 'em."

"Well, I'll go over to the Yacht Club to-night and enter the boat. You can go with me, can't you?"

"Sure thing! And I'll sail in the race, if it blows hard; but if it's a moderate breeze, Bat better go— he's lighter than I am."

"Yes," said Gus, " that's a good idea, and if it's very light air, I'd better go alone— I weigh the least of any of us."

They skipped about the upper part of the harbor and when the strong westerly puffs hit her, Lumpy, true to

his statement, slid up to the weather gunwale "like a cat," and instead of being overpowered by the sudden gusts, the little boat stood up, took her medicine, and went all the faster.

Just as they decided it was time to go round and head for home, an unusually heavy flaw came rippling over the water.

"Look out there, Lumpy. Get up to wind'ard," the skipper ordered suddenly.

Lumpy was on the job and the little craft did not take a drop over her side.

"Now I know what we ought to have!" exclaimed Lumpy.

"What's that?" asked the skipper.

"We need two good straps, or grommets, on each side of the boat, fastened down to her ceiling-strips, so that the fellow who goes as ballast can stick his toes into them, the same as in snowshoes, and then he can lean his whole weight out to wind'ard when she tries to heel over during the puffs."

"Lumpy, you've got fine ideas, and no mistake! I'll make the grommets to-morrow, and fasten them in with a wooden toggle running 'thwartships under two strips of ceiling. But here we are at the float!"

"Did you enjoy your afternoon, Gus?" Mrs. McKenzie asked at supper.

"Oh, it was corking. The boat's a pippin! We're going to put her in the race. But I didn't sail much till Lumpy came. I landed down at the railways and, while I was watching the men repairing schooners, I got acquainted with a fine old gentleman who runs the business there."

"Down at Frame and Patten's? Yes, Mr. Frame is

a dear old man. Every one likes him, and Archie says he's one of the cleverest shipwrights in the country. But you must never ask him— about his family." Mrs. McKenzie nearly choked. It was all of a minute before she continued, haltingly, "That is his one— great sorrow. His only child was lost— or stolen— when a baby— and his wife— who was broken-hearted— died shortly after. Both Mr. Frame— and his friend Mr. Higgins— take a great interest— in boys— and young men; possibly— because each lost a wife— and baby boy— under similar circumstances. At any rate — Mr. Frame always has five or six young fellows— whom he's looking out for. He's always giving them instruction— and advice and— and getting them jobs."

The good woman was much agitated. She seemed relieved as she announced:

"But here comes Allister McMillan!"

As the two boys started for the Yacht Club, Lumpy remarked:

"You'll have to give the boat a name, Gus."

"I know it, Lumpy, What sh'll it be?"

"It's up to you, my hearty. You're boss."

"But I can't think of anything to call her."

"Oh, you'll be able to think of something by the time the committee ask for it."

The two boys soon reached the Yacht Club and were shown into the presence of the Regatta committee.

"Yes, boys," decided the chairman, "you may race. I'd like to know who has a better right than the families of the 'Big Three.' They're charter members. But what's the boat's name?"

"Well," said Gus, thoughtfully, "you may put her down as-er-a-the *Waterwitch*."

Chapter VI

A SAIL IN THE *WATERWITCH*

"WILL three be too many?" Bat shouted, as he and Lumpy came down Captain McKenzie's pier, the next day.

"No," answered Gus, throwing a handful of water on the snotter to keep it from slipping down the mast. "The more the merrier; in fact she'll go faster during the puffs. So pile in 'n' we'll be off!"

When they were fairly under way, Gus asked:

"Would you like to sail her, Bat? I won't ask Lumpy, for he refused when we were out before."

"Yes, I'd like to sail her for a spell. I'm stuck on steering."

"Now," said Lumpy, "we're getting a practice sail. We c'n have another to-morrow; then, the rest of the week, till Saturday, we'll have for drying and smoothing off the boat's bottom."

"Yes, that's so," said Bat, "but it won't be much practice, if I hog the tiller, so you'd better steer, Gus, as you're the one who'll have to sail her in the race."

"Oh, I've got the hang of her pretty well now; I know just how flat you can lace her and just about how close to hug the wind to get the best out of her."

But the boys insisted and Gus resumed his place at the helm.

"How's Scoop?" he asked, when the wheel was relieved. "Have you seen him since?"

"We both have," said Lumpy, "and do you know, he's game, all right! He bought a pair of water wings and we're going to teach him to swim. He says he'll learn in a few weeks or know the reason why."

"I'm glad to hear he's so spunky," Gus went on. "I think I sh'll like him first rate. He seems to be a corking fellow!"

"You bet he's all that!" agreed Bat.

The *Waterwitch* had been scooting along at a rapid pace, had left the cove astern, doubled Five Pound Island and was now standing down the harbor past the busy wharves on the town side. Presently the crew discovered a shabby "bank" dory slowly poking her way out of one of the many docks. This dory had outlived its usefulness in the fishing industry, and now, in its old age, was serving as the training ship for a crowd of the raggedest urchins or wharf rats imaginable. They had a small improvised spritsail, made from the tick of a discarded "donkey's breakfast," as sailors call their mattress, tacked on to an old joist for a mast, with a strip of firring to shove up the almost square head of the sail and a similar piece for a boom. As the *Waterwitch* glided along close-hauled across the bow of the one-time banker, whose skipper was steering with a fence slat over one quarter, Bat exclaimed in a low tone:

"Why, it's Cap'n Rafferty 'n' the Union Hillers!"

The crew of the *Waterwitch* made a feeble attempt to stop grinning.

"Hey, look out there, or I'll run you down," hailed the dory's skipper.

"You'll have to go some to do it!" bawled Bat.

"Yes, get a move on and catch up," yelled Lumpy.

"Say, I'll give you a licking, Bantam, when I ketch

yer ashore — see?" shouted Tim. "And I'll do it where there won't be no Turkey Red to stop it, either!"

"Cut it out, fellows," said Gus. "We ought to cut out slinging sass with fellows like that. Let 'em rave. They're just sore because we've got a better boat. As for Tim, while I don't go in for fighting, I'm not a bit afraid of him or what he c'n do."

"Gee, but Tim made me mad, though," declared Bat. "I hosy the first go at him. I bet I c'n lick him with one hand!"

"Forget it," suggested Gus.

"Forget it 's right," agreed the phlegmatic Lumpy.

Just then a wicked looking flaw came traveling over the water on the weather bow. The ripples were dark green, almost blue, as the order came:

"Pile up to win'ard, there."

The crew had had an eye out for the weather, and slid up until they sat on the gunwale, while Lumpy for the first time tried the toe straps, or beckets. They were a great success for he found he could lean backwards and add greatly to the boat's stability.

"These beckets are pippins," declared Lumpy, "and we ought to have another set for Bat. We'll need them often when the wind is strong and puffy."

"Good scheme," the skipper agreed. "I'll put a row of 'em in to-night."

They were skirting the edge of the wharves now, and at a long blast of a whistle the skipper had to luff while the Boston steamer backed out of the dock. The *Waterwitch* headreached until she was nearly at the end of the pier and the steamer was nearly out of the dock with her stern swinging up the harbor, when a man rushed down the wharf and called loudly:

"Hey, boys! Put me on the steamer. I'll pay you well for it! My family are aboard. I just missed the boat by going back to the store for something for the children!"

Gus hauled in on the sheet the minute he heard the man shout, and the sailboat shot up to the pier-end where the stranger was waiting on the ladder. The cool skipper took in the situation at a glance and headed about amidships of the steamer. Bat and Lumpy tugged away at the oars. The steamer was nearly swung now. Gus heard the bell — the signal to stop backing.

"Will we make it?" inquired the anxious passenger. "We belong in the west and our train leaves Boston at six!"

"I think we've got a chance," Gus answered. "Way enough there, boys. I've got to make an un-sailorlike job of it. We'll bump along her weather side."

The *Waterwitch* ran straight for the steamer. Instead of letting up, the wind came in vicious puffs just when it was not wanted. When they were within a boat's length, Gus heard the bell for half speed ahead. A moment later, as he jammed the helm hard down, the jingles sounded. The *Waterwitch* luffed with her boom and sail scraping along the steamer's side. Bat tossed a line to a man on deck.

"Get a turn there, Bat, around the for'ard thwart," yelled the skipper. "Keep it close to the gunwale, or we'll be towed under."

Above, the white, scared faces of the man's wife and children could be seen peering down as they begged the passenger to be careful. The steamer was now going full speed, but willing hands drew the man up on board.

Just as Gus had his crew stationed for sheering off, with Bat ready to let go the turn, a handkerchief fell with a clink into the bottom of the boat. On glancing up, the boys saw the smiling face of their late passenger who shouted:

"Well done, boys! Well done! Good luck! So long!"

The *Waterwitch* sheered off safely, although Bat had a sharp knife ready to cut the line if necessary. When they were clear of the rough sea the steamer churned up, Gus ordered:

"Open up the handkerchief, and let's see what's in it."

"Three five-dollar gold pieces!" exclaimed Bat. "Just think of it! What are you fellows going to do with yours? I'll save mine for the Fourth! What a time we'll have!"

"Now 'vast heaving," remonstrated Gus, "'n' clap a stopper on your jaw tackle, as my father used to say when he forgot himself and talked deep water. Let's hang on to the money until we find something we want to do. We c'n buy a whole lot with that."

"The clear thing!" agreed Bat and Lumpy in unison.

That evening Bat and Lumpy, accompanied by Scoop, appeared at Snug Harbor.

"Come aboard, fellows," Gus invited, for he had already adopted a few local expressions.

Lumpy gave a bound into the hammock that hung across the end of the piazza. The hooks and ring bolts were strong, but the hammock was getting old, and with a sound of something ripping Lumpy went through the meshes in the middle.

The boys burst into roars of laughter, and Mrs. McKenzie inquired:

"Are you hurt, Allister?"

Lumpy had a keen sense of humor, and, as he sat on the piazza floor with his head protruding like an old-time criminal in the pillory, he replied:

"In the words of the illustrious El Higgins, when he fell and skun his face, 'I've yet to meet my Waterloo — I ha-ve!'"

"Who's El Higgins?" asked Gus.

"He's a well-known character who lives alone in a small cottage up the hill over there," Mrs. McKenzie answered. "You'll probably see quite a lot of him, for, although he's too old to do much, he still visits every fine day at the shipyards and railways where he used to work."

"Well, how about the race?" asked Scoop.

"We'll bend the large sail on its spars to-morrow, fellows," Gus explained, "and have a good try out, if there's any wind."

"I think there'll be a breeze," said Bat. "Didn't you see the mackerel sky and mares' tails this afternoon? It's a sure sign of foul weather and it's more than likely the wind'll be from the nor'ard and east'ard."

"My, you boys talk like old fishermen!" exclaimed Mrs. McKenzie.

"We can't very well help it, ma'am," said Lumpy. "We've heard our fathers predict the weather all our lives, and so it's second nature for us to notice little things about the sky. Some of the signs never fail and we'd be foolish not to notice 'em."

"My mother often asks me what the weather's going to be, when father's at sea," said Bat.

"Mine, too," added Lumpy.

"But what do you think about putting some black-

lead on the boat's bottom, after she has dried a little, fellows?" asked Bat.

"I should think it'd be a good plan to try," answered Lumpy. "But what do you think, Gus?"

"I don't know. I'm in doubt for I heard it argued at South Brooklyn by some yacht captains. Some believed in it and others didn't. One of them said that you might put as fine and smooth a surface on a yacht's bottom as possible, and then polish it until it resembled a parlor stove, launch the yacht, reach under the water and rub your hand on the polished surface and it would feel clammy and sticky. Of course this captain didn't believe in it, and he said it was nearly as silly to black-lead as it was for the old timers to rub soft soap on the bottoms of their vessels before going into a race.

"We all know that soft soap or grease," Gus went on, "will harden the minute it enters the water, and it would be impossible to rub soap, tallow, grease or fat of any kind on to a vessel's bottom evenly enough to avoid having a whole lot of furrows and ridges when it got into the water and hardened."

"Look out now, Lumpy!" exclaimed Bat, apparently much concerned. "Never stay in the water too long — you'd surely harden, for you're fat enough!"

Chapter VII

A FLY-WHEEL

GUS was early astir the next morning and, as usual, went to his window the first thing to look at the cove and size up the weather. The scent of lilacs, the chirping of robins and the sun, although a little too red to promise a continuance of fine weather, added so much to the splendor of the morning, that it seemed to the city boy like enchantment. Bat proved right about the weather. The signs told no lies and by noon the sun was hidden by gray clouds, while the wind had a decidedly easterly tendency.

"Gee whiz!" Gus thought to himself, "I'd better use the small sail, and, as I'm alone, tuck a reef into it, too! This wind's backing all the time, 'n' increasing in force. We're going to have foul weather all right — no mistake!"

With a single reef in her mainsail, the *Waterwitch* had all the cloth she needed, but Gus figured that with the weight of one more person on the weather gunwale, he could carry whole sail to good advantage. But the railway was soon at hand, and, shooting into the dock alongside the float stage, he hitched the boat to a ring bolt, furled his sail, passed the sheet around it a few turns, like a gasket, and climbed up on the wharf to see his good friend, the jolly shipwright.

Mr. Frame was watching a job of "hanging a vessel up" on the railway, standing where he could see the men

directed by a foreman driving stout shores or props under the bilges and wedging them up with a battering ram swung by six stalwart fellows.

As he saw Gus, the builder sang out:

"Ahoy, there, my hearty! How are you to-day?"

"First rate, sir. But what are they doing to the schooner?"

"We're hanging her up holding her in the air by her bilges — so we can put a new keel in her. She went ashore on Egg Rock when bound in to Kettle Island for bait from the weir. Her shoe's entirely gone and the keel's shattered so badly it'll have to be new the entire length. She's about sixty tons displacement, which means that's the total weight of everything you see there: hull, spars, sails, anchors, ballast, and, in short, the whole fabric.

"If there were scales large enough to place the vessel on and weigh her, and her entire equipment, the weight would be exactly that of the volume of water she displaces or shoves out of the way when she's lowered into the water. Do you catch that, sonny?

"An interesting stunt for you would be to take an old bread- or cake-box that doesn't leak and lay it in a large baking pan that has been weighed. Then fill the box with water even to the brim and gently place a full-rigged toy boat in the water. It's obvious that a certain amount of water'll flow over the edge of your tank into the baking pan. Weigh the baking pan again with this slopped over water in it; then weigh the boat. After you've subtracted the weight of the empty pan from what it weighed when full, you'll find the weight of the water she displaced and it'll be exactly what the fully rigged boat weighs."

"I'll do that," said Gus, "for I noticed a large pan and an old bread-box up in the loft of our boathouse, and I've a toy sloop that'll float in the tank without touching her ends or bobstay to the edges. I'm on to it, but I think I can explain it better to the fellows this way."

"Right you are, my boy, but I want to tell you about this schooner. You see, by wedging up all around several times, they've raised the vessel so that the keel-blocks are all loose and they're taking them out of the way. Some of the gang have begun to split out the old keel, while the men over yonder are hewing out a piece to take its place."

"But, Mr. Frame, that's only an old second-hand stick of piling they're working on! Why don't you use a better piece of timber?"

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed the shipbuilder. "I knew you'd ask that. I wish I could get a few dozen sticks like that and I'd make a raft of 'em 'n' keep 'em in the dock for just such jobs as this. That, my son, is an old rock maple pile that's been in salt water for years and barring a few feet at its upper end, is pickled. There's nothing finer for a keel, and when building a new vessel, we use just such timbers—if we c'n get 'em."

"Well, I learn something every time I come down here. And I notice now that they have the cutting-off, or butt mark on the old pile just above where it came out of the water."

"Yes, sonny, but who told you what a butt mark was? I don't remember doing so."

"I asked the carpenters down at the docks in South Brooklyn what the mark meant," answered Gus.

"Now look away from the keel they're hewing and tell me how to make the butt mark," Mr. Frame commanded.

"You make a straight line across whatever lumber's to be cut off, and then, commencing at the top and at the left-hand side of the straight line, draw a reverse curve that'll look like a quarter of a circle on the upper left-hand side and another quarter-circle on the lower right-hand side, and, as the reverse curve's continuous, it'll cut the straight line half way across the timber!"

"Correct, my boy! Quite correct! But come up to the office. Now there's the model and a clean sheet of paper. Take off the lines and produce the body plan. I'll fill my pipe and have a smoke while you work."

It took some time, but when the old builder had carefully examined the result, he exclaimed:

"Bravo, my boy, bravo! I thought it was a little too much of a lesson, but I see you didn't forget a thing. You must have been going through the process in your mind so's not to forget it."

"Yes, sir, I have. This morning, after chopping the wood, I took an old model of a fishing schooner that was out in the boathouse and went through the operation."

"Now," said the builder, "I'll show you about the use of bow and buttock lines in fairing the body."

After he had explained how these lines are straight in the body and half-breadth plans and curved in the sheer plan, he added:

"Well, that'll be all for to-day. Let's go down and see how the men are getting along with that keel job, and, before I forget it, I'll get your adze. It's as sharp as a razor, now, since Mose, our mill man, sharpened it. Here you are! This is a lip adze and is hard to grind, so look out for nails. In Great Britain and in the British colonies they still use the plain adze, which is thick and clumsy, although easier to grind. But the American

style of tools, with the exception of plane irons and carvers' gouges, are 'way ahead of anything in the world, both for shape and efficiency."

"Thank you, sir. And good day!" said Gus, as he picked up his adze and started to go down to the *Water-witch*. As he passed the engine-room, it occurred to him to look in and compliment Mose on the fine job he had done at cleaning up and sharpening the adze. He had just seen the mill man pass in, so he was greatly surprised not to see him when he entered himself. But he saw something else which made his blood run cold. The great flywheel was well back at the left of the entrance with nearly half its diameter down in a pit, and there, sprawled out on the engine-room floor with his head and shoulders between the huge spokes, was an aged man.

Gus realized at once that the old fellow was drunk, for every indication— the crumpled hat, soiled clothes and the half-pint bottle in the jacket pocket — pointed to this.

"What if Mose should turn on the steam?" was his instant thought. He did not dare to go to the boiler-room to look for Mose, so he grasped the man's ankles and tugged with all his might. With the first pull, he failed to budge the body an inch, but just as the boy braced himself for a second tug, there came the hiss of steam. "Avast there!" he yelled and gave a mighty tug. The giant wheel began to go around, lifting the man higher and higher until, at an angle of forty-five degrees, the boy's effort was rewarded. He fell backward as he dragged the victim of drink from danger.

"Are you hurt?" Mose asked, as he ran and helped Gus to his feet.

"No, but I've got a good-sized bump on the back of my head. That cement floor's some hard, believe me!"

"If you hadn't been tugging away, the old un 'd 've been killed sure, for I never seen him when I come in. I went right through to the b'iler-room, hove a shoveful of coal on the fire, glanced at the gauge 'n' then come in 'n' turned on the steam at t'other side o' the injine. When I heerd you holler, I shut off some lively!"

Some of the hangers-on now carried the old drunkard into the shop and placed him on some bales of oakum where he could sleep off his debauch in safety.

"I'd turn the tarnation old fool over to the perlice," growled one — a new-comer in Gloucester.

"I'll turn him over to John Frame!" retorted Mose. "He'll fix him, yet — He's been trying for years."

"What's John's score now, Mose?" asked one of the workmen, as he started back to his job.

"A dozen that I knows on, 'n' all of 'em as fur gone as this un. But here goes his half pint!" and suiting the action to the word, Mose took aim at an old propeller in the junk heap and hit it neatly with the bottle.

"Good shot!" yelled Gus, as he hurried down the wharf where he had spied Bat and Lumpy talking to Mr. Frame.

Chapter VIII

A CALL ON CAPTAIN WONSON

"HELLO, there, Gus!" yelled Bat.

"We thought you were never coming!" sang out Lumpy.

"But I've kept them interested, for I knew they were friends of yours," said Mr. Frame. "With you three who knows but what there'll be an amateur craft on the stocks some day!"

"I don't think the time's so very far off, to tell the truth," admitted Gus, "but it'll be only a flat-bottomed skiff for a tender, so we can keep the *Waterwitch* out at a mooring where she'll always float. There's a nasty scum on the flats at our landing that gets all over the boat's side when she's on her bilge at low water."

"Going to build a skiff?" asked Bat and Lumpy together.

"Yes, fellows, the first day it rains so hard we have to stay in we'll turn to 'n' start a skiff."

"Why can't we make it a tarpaulin muster 'n' all chip in? We've got the fifteen," suggested Bat.

"We can if you fellows want to. What do you say?"

"Hurrah for the skiff!" they yelled with one accord.

"If you're going to build a skiff," said Mr. Frame, much amused at their enthusiasm, "take my advice and don't make her too small. What does it matter, if she's as long as the *Waterwitch?* You want a tender large enough to carry all of you and once in a while, you'll

take another boy, and there must be room for lunch-baskets, water-jug, and all your stores. So, if I were you, I'd make the length thirteen feet and the beam five.

"And for shape," the shipwright went on, "I'd have her like what we call the homemade skiff. They're not so pretty to look at, nor do they present such a 'built-by-a-builder' appearance as the flaring-sided Salisbury style, but, believe me, they're much better for your purpose.

"The only trouble with the homemade variety is the fact that hardly anybody ever gets the right profile sweep or curve to the bottom, and they seldom have it cut up high enough aft. One of them, properly shaped, would row nearly as well as the fancy article."

"But what's the right shape?" asked Gus.

"Well, that's easily answered, my boy. Only have flare enough to the sides to protect the bottom corners from chafing when alongside a wharf or landing, and, then, of course, there's the all-important sweep to the bottom. It should start almost at the forefoot and form a long easy curve ending aft above the water-line. The stern-board, or transom, should be only half as deep as most people make them.

"Then, there's another thing. These 'home-maders' are always planked 'thwartshipwise on their bottoms and fore'n'aft on their sides, but they'd be much better and much lighter, if they had hackmatack frames and were planked fore'n'aft on their bottoms.

"Now you draw a plan, Gus, of your idea of the skiff and I'll look it over. When you get ready to build, lay her down on heavy paper, bring your body moulds here, and I'll give you the hackmatack knees, and Mose'll saw the frames out for you at the band-saw."

"Three cheers for Mr. Frame!" suggested the demonstrative Bat.

"Mr. Frame, you're too good!" remonstrated Gus.

A look almost of sadness spread over the large face of the usually mirthful ship-builder. He seemed to gulp for a moment, then he hastily asserted:

"Oh, no, I'm not. It's my duty to help clean, thoughtful, boys who want to learn something. And I haven't forgotten I was a boy once, myself. But I must be off. Come and see me whenever you can."

"You wouldn't think it," said Bat, as they piled aboard the *Waterwitch*, "but it's blowing great guns outside. You don't realize it here, the harbor's so smooth."

"And the wind's backed till it's an out and out no'theeaster," added Gus, as he hoisted the sail and adjusted the sprit in the snotter. "Shove off," he ordered, as he went aft and took the tiller. A vicious gust of wind struck them, but the *Waterwitch* shot ahead while skipper and crew climbed well up on the weather rail.

"These extra toe-beckets are just the clear thing," remarked Lumpy. "We can make this packet carry her muslin a good deal better with these."

"Yes, that's right," assented the skipper.

"Hello!" Bat exclaimed, suddenly.

"What's up?" asked the others.

"Why there's the *Delia I. Matheson* as sure as can be. She must have torn her seine or something has happened to her! See her just off Ten Pound with all four lowers on her? Gee but she's got a move on! She never'd come here with a salt fare at this time o' year with so many fresh fish markets at other ports. Let's run down, I'd like to hail Dad."

"We won't have to run down very far," Lumpy remarked. "The *Matheson* is a flyer even by the wind and she'll be on top of us in no time, so let's stand across two or three times up here at the mouth of Harbor Cove and then we'll lose no time at all when she shoots in."

They had only made a couple of trips across when, with a rush and splash and a bang and a roar of slatting canvas, the *Delia I. Matheson* shot into the wind and as if by magic all four lowers dropped as one. Some of the large crew furled up and others got out mooring-lines, while her skipper— the redoubtable Captain Wonson, better known in Gloucester as Single Reef Charlie, heaved his wheel hard over and the noble vessel swung in a short circle and ran to a vacant berth at the Halibut Wharf.

The *Waterwitch* was alonside before the schooner had lost her way, and the big bronzed seaman in sweater, sea-boots and sou'wester sang out:

"Come right aboard, boys, and make yourselves at home. I'll be with you in a minute."

"We tore our seine," the skipper told them presently, "and the engine gave out, Bart. But how have you been, son? And how's mother?"

"I'm fine, Dad," Bat replied, "and Ma's first rate. We're all well at home."

"That's good! And how are you, Allister?" asked the captain.

"Fust rate, sir, thank you," Lumpy replied.

"And you're Gus Harvey aren't you?"— turning to Gus.

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, although he could not understand how the captain knew who he was.

"I knew the minute I clapped eyes on you, because I've often seen your picture aboard the *Maine Girl.* I'd have known who you were, anyway, even if I hadn't seen your picture, for Cap'n McKenzie told me lately when we met in Portland that you were here and had made Bat's acquaintance. Then, too, the fact of your being in that sailboat would have been enough, for there's not another person on Cape Ann the Cap'n would let use her but you!

"That boat and the double-barrel gun are almost sacred with Archie. He had the boat built to order for smelting and shooting when his vessel happens to be at home. But I see you take good care of her; there isn't a spear of eel grass or any other dirt about her."

"Yes," spoke up Lumpy, "Gus makes us pick dirt out of her as fast as any gets in, and we're getting so we rather like keeping things 'shipshape and Bristol fashion,' as he calls it."

"Haw! haw! haw! That's a good one for a boy," laughed the captain. "A regular deep-water expression — no mistake!"

"Dad," asked Bat, "may I show the fellows over the schooner?"

"Yes, my son, but see here. It's late! You'd better stay to supper. I'll telephone over to the women folks and we'll sail home later."

While the captain was gone up the wharf, Bat took his friends down and showed them the finely finished cabin. Then he suggested:

"Now we've seen her aft, let's go for'ard and we'll run up against the gang."

As they were abreast the booby hatch, a big brawny fellow who was looking out of the fore scuttle sang out:

"How are you, Bat? Come down and bring your friends."

Bat was a favorite with the crew, and he was soon engaged in exchanging good-natured banter with them all. But Gus was still curious about every part of a vessel so he started to examine the hold. A hatch was off and there was just light enough to see to walk about. He walked slowly along, noting the size of the beams, carlings, mast partners and the other features of her construction until he was just under the grub-beam at the break of the deck.

"There's something doing!" Gus exclaimed. "Where's all this water coming from, I wonder? I'll bet the captain cracked on till he started a butt!"

Now he shouted:

"Hey, there, fellows! Bring a lantern, quick!"

The hold was swarming with men and boys in a moment, and Gus grabbed a lantern from one of them and climbed to where he had heard the sound of running water in one of the fish pens.

"Here it is!" he exclaimed. "A regular stream spouting through the ceiling! Run on deck, somebody, and see if she's settled much."

One of the men started up immediately, but hardly was he on the notched Samson-post before the cook exclaimed:

"Lord, it's over the flooring! My feet are wet."

The man was on deck now and, after a look over the side, yelled:

"Come up! Come up! She's sinking!"

The mob went up both avenues of escape— the Samson-post and the fore scuttle— in a hurry.

"Where's the seine-heaver?" asked Gus, as they reached deck.

"Gone ashore," said some one.

"Well, Bat," ordered Gus, "you run like sixty for a tow-boat and I'll run and engage a railway. We'll save her yet!"

As Gus jumped from the forerigging on to the wharf, he called back:

"Man the pumps— both of 'em."

The boys performed their missions in an incredibly short time; the tug came alongside, the schooner was backed into the stream, and, just as she had settled to within two feet of her scuppers she grounded on the keel blocks, and in another ten minutes was hauled out on the railway. Then, it was easy to see what the matter was, for not only was a butt started, but a plank stood off for several inches.

The captain and the seine-heaver had appeared at last, and as they stood looking at the defective butt, the latter declared:

"Well, something had to start. The way you carried sail all the way home was downright wicked!"

"Didn't even have a 'single reef' in, did I?" chuckled the captain, as he poked the big seine-heaver in the ribs with his thumb.

"No, four lowers, when any one else would've been under storm-trys'l, two-reefed fores'l 'n' jumbo!"

As they went over the rail headed for supper, the captain showed he had not forgotten the boys' cool, prompt action, for he said, significantly:

"Boys, you're all right."

"Eat hearty, boys, 'n' give the ship a good name!" the cook advised.

"You bet we will!" answered Bat. "Just pass the cream o' tartar biscuits again, please, and some more of

those croquettes — yes — and a little more curried meat. I always did like rice and curry."

As the captain was changing his clothes in the cabin before going ashore, he remarked:

"I've been thinking about this race you boys told me about at table a whole lot. Now it's a rule in these mosquito races to allow two men in a boat. If it blows hard, two boys won't be able to furnish so much live ballast as the other boats'll have.

"After I've seen my wife, I'll skip over to the Yacht Club and use a little diplomacy. I've been a member ever since it started and a suggestion from me will, I think, make things fairer for you boys. Anyway, I sh'll suggest to the committee that as they've announced their intention of offering every inducement to stir up interest in racing, it would be a good thing not to limit the crews. The more the merrier!"

"That's something like what Cap'n McKenzie calls strategy," Gus suggested.

"Yes, but diplomacy describes it better," replied the skipper. "Bart'll let you know in the morning how I come out. But come on now. Let's see how you fellows handle a sailboat."

In a few minutes the *Waterwitch* had fanned out from under the lee of the wharf and run into the full force of the northeaster. It was blowing harder than during the day; the moon shone between the clouds, lighting up the white caps, and it was a weird night to be afloat.

"What do you think of the weather, sir?" asked Gus.

"It'll blow like Sam Hill before it gets through, — mark my words for it. The moon won't show herself much more this week, and it's a wonder the rain's held

off so long. In my opinion this storm 'll reach its height about Saturday, and 'll blow itself out at about sundown that day."

"Then we'll have plenty of wind for the race!" yelled Bat.

"It'll be bully!" exclaimed Lumpy.

"Ten times better 'n' a calm!" added Gus.

The *Waterwitch* was sailing like the wind, throwing the spray in sheets. Gus headed her straight for the pier, but suddenly he put the tiller hard-a-lee and the lively craft spun around like a top and shot alongside the float stage, losing her headway just as she reached the end of the float.

"Where'd you learn to sail a boat like that?" Captain Wonson asked.

"Why, around New York, sir, what little I know," was the reply.

Aided by the captain the *Waterwitch*, minus her equipment, was soon hauled high and dry and turned bottom up for a scrubbing and, if possible, a drying.

As he was leaving with Bat and Lumpy, the captain turned and said:

"I haven't seen what they've got at the club-house in the shape of a mosquito boat, but I'll venture to say that they'll have to turn out nice and early in the morning to learn to handle one any better than you can, Gus, my boy!"

Chapter IX

TUNING UP

THE next morning the gale was still raging but no rain had fallen. The sun rose like a ball of fire.

"If Old Sol only stays out long enough to dry the boat's bottom, I'll not complain," Gus thought, as he sized up the weather. He had finished a hard half hour's practice with his new adze, when Bat came running towards the shop waving a typewritten circular.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" he yelled. "Dad got them to change the rule; we c'n carry as many men or boys as we want!"

"That's fine! We'll have a better show, if it blows hard, but as it now stands we've got to have two more fellows for spare hands to use if it blows out loud. They must be good swimmers, too. Do you know of two heavy boys, who'll obey orders? Of course, I mean decent fellows."

"Why yes, there's Dogger Lufkin; you met him the other day when Scoop came near slipping his cable. And there's Flip Thurston; he was there too; they're both corkers and register A No. 1 at Lloyds, as my Dad would say."

"Well, go over this morning and say that we may want to use them, but are not sure. We'll give them a sail after the race anyway, so they'll surely have some sport."

"Yes, Gus, I'll 'tend to it and I'll go now. So long! I'm off," and Bat departed as rapidly as he came.

The sun made a few attempts to stay out but finally retired behind the clouds. The north-easter blew as hard as ever and it soon began to drizzle, so Gus moved the *Waterwitch* into the shop on rollers. Then he turned to and worked on the outlines of the proposed skiff. When he was satisfied, he rigged out in oilskins and went down the road to Frame and Patten's.

"Come aboard," sang out Mr. Frame, as Gus knocked at the door of the office.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the veteran, as he ran his experienced eye over the lines. "You've drawn just what I described and I couldn't improve on it in any way. You can go ahead and enlarge it, full size, and, whenever you get ready, we'll saw out your frames."

"You're very kind, sir!" Gus answered. "We'll get at it next week, for this week we're getting ready to race."

"All right, my son, come round any time."

Gus had just laid out the sandpaper and cork blocks in the boathouse to start smoothing the boat, when he heard the boys coming. In they burst like a cyclone with Bat first, then Lumpy, Scoop, Dogger, and Flip, all talking at once.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Gus, taking advantage of a lull in the confusion. "We're a large crew!"

"You bet!" shouted Bat. "'N' many hands make light work' so let's turn to."

"Gimme some sandpaper. That's mine. You've got my block. No, I haven't either. Can't I have this block, Gus? I hosy this one," came the chorus from out of the scramble to start working. In their eagerness they never stopped to remove oilskins or sou'westers and they swept three separate quires of sandpaper on to the shop floor. Then, they all crowded

together amidships where the boat's bottom was a convenient height to kneel and went at it vigorously.

No one stopped to pick up the bundles of sandpaper and their muddy boots would have ruined the whole supply in a few minutes, if Gus, who used method in all things, had not stopped the whole operation. It was no use to try to make one's self heard above all the scratching, rasping and hooting, so Gus raised his hand, an act, which, coming unexpectedly, brought all work to a standstill.

"Now, fellows," he said, "I don't want to hurt your feelings. It's bully of you to come to smooth off the boat, but, on the level, we've started all wrong. Now let's pick up those sheets of sandpaper, sort 'em out, and put them in piles on the bench. But take off your hats and coats. The rain's been dripping off your clothes all over the boat and you can't smooth wet wood. Now, while you fellows get things straightened out, I'll wipe the boat dry with a chamois-skin."

When order had been restored, Gus continued:

"Now listen. Before you were all bunched together at the easiest place to work and no one had elbow room. You must spread out so there's an equal space between you, and, as it'll take too long to draw lots for places, the best way's for each fellow to take the station nearest to where he's standing now."

"All right, fellows, pitch in," ordered Bat.

"Avast there! Wait a minute!" shouted Gus. "Don't stop to quarrel over the sandpaper blocks; one's nearly as good as another, and you ought to learn how to use a sheet of sandpaper properly. Each sheet should be cut into four parts. . ."

"But we've no scissors," interrupted Dogger Lufkin.

"Who ever heard of cutting sandpaper with scissors?" asked the boss, scornfully.

"Our teacher at the Sloyd school does! She always uses them!" came the answer.

"There's only one way to cut sandpaper and that is to lay the sheet with half of it sticking over the edge of a sharp-cornered board. Then, give it a determined yank, or tear, hauling downwards. Do the same to the two half sheets and it's all quartered and done man-fashion. I've seen the yacht-builder at City Island who told me how to do it, tear four thicknesses at a time and it was done in a jiffy. So quarter your paper and turn to."

"Now," said Bat, "we're prepared to work to advantage, and 'many hands make light work'!"

They used three numbers of sandpaper, winding up with zero, and after an hour of vigorous rubbing down, the young skipper pronounced the job "good enough."

As they sat on the piazza resting and talking race, a boy loomed up in the deepening twilight trudging along the Causeway from East Gloucester. He was carrying a bundle which it seemed he was about to deliver for some storekeeper.

"Gee!" exclaimed Gus, just as the boy got abreast of the front gate, "it's awful red over t' the nor'ard 'n' . . . The seine loft's on fire! Come on, fellows, we'll ring the alarm!"

"No yer won't, I seen it first. I'll ring it in," asserted the boy with the bundle.

Gus had not had the slightest idea who the boy was until he heard his voice. "It's Tim Rafferty!" he thought to himself.

The two started off about even, but Gus had to jump

the low rail at the end of the piazza and the fence at the boundary of the yard. Besides having the clear road before him, Tim was somewhat larger and his legs were longer.

On they rushed, the other boys close behind, all except Lumpy, who puffed along forlornly in the rear. Now Gus had cleared the fence and was tearing along the road, a couple of rods behind Tim. Brighter and brighter flared the flames. The cove and all of Rocky Neck were lighted up by the lurid glow.

On rushed the boys like mad. Now the leader was within fifty feet of the box. Gus saw that although he had closed up on Tim he could not pass him. The goal was too near. Now the leader had only twenty feet to go. Ten feet behind him came the fleet-footed Gus, followed closely by the long-legged Scoop, with Bat next and the others straggling out behind.

Splash, went the leader into a puddle, face downward. He had stubbed his toe! Snatching his bundle out of the mud with his left hand, Tim reached out to grab Gus by the ankle as the latter rushed by. Gus saw the move and swerved to one side.

"Hurray! I guess — I — hosy — ringing — in — this — alarm!"

"Yer wouldn't o' had no chance ter 'f I hadn't had no bundle 'n' I hadn't stubbed my toe," shouted the conquered Tim, as the boys hurried through a short cut to the burning building.

The apparatus came, but the tar-soaked factory was doomed. In less than half an hour, there was nothing left except the charred tops of the piles on which it had stood.

"Gee!" exclaimed Bat, as they reached Snug Harbor

again. "If all hands hadn't been so busy looking at the fire, there'd been something doing in the fight line! Hey, boys?"

Just then Tim rode by, seated on the tailboard of a wagon.

"I'll fix yer yet, Bantam," he yelled, shaking his fist at Gus. "I'll fix yer good 'n' plenty when yer ain't got none o' yer gang around, see?"

Chapter X

UNCLE EL HIGGINS

THE next morning the wind was blowing harder than ever and the rain came down steadily. The morning papers were full of disasters all along the coast. Vessels had dragged and gone ashore in Boston Harbor; trees and a church steeple had fallen in a nearby town, and all mariners who were in port were advised to remain there for the present.

"Don't you worry about the cap'n?" Gus asked Mrs. McKenzie, as an unusually heavy gust shook Snug Harbor to its foundations.

"I used to fret, but the captain has assured me that in a great many ways he is safer in a fine staunch vessel at sea than he would be at many occupations on shore, so I can't say that I worry, but I'm always glad when these northeasters are over, just the same."

Gus rigged out in oilskins and sou'wester and went down to see Mr. Frame. The shipwright was smoking comfortably in his office and, after they had gone over their previous work, he showed him how to find the center of triangles. They practised on the jibs of an old sail plan, and then he showed Gus an improved and simple way to find the center of a gaff sail, like a fore-and-aft foresail or mainsail.

"But, come," said the old shipwright at last, "I've just thought of something, and it's strange I didn't think of it before. Over in that old smokehouse, just

this side of the nearest copper-paint factory, Sam Elwell is building a small sloop to be used as a party boat in summer and for shore fishing the rest of the year. Let's go over and see her."

As they entered the boat shop Mr. Frame led the way past what looked like a boat-shaped cage to the far corner of the shop where several men were gathered around an upright boiler which looked as though it had come out of some steam launch.

Mr. Elwell looked up and exclaimed:

"Well! well! well! Come over for points, hey?"

"Yes, we have, and I reckon you're just the one that's able to give 'em in the building of this kind of craft. She's out of my line, you know. But how are you, old boy?"

"First class," replied the boat-builder. "But who's this young gentleman you have in tow?"

Gus was introduced, and Boss Elwell exclaimed:

"You've come to the right place, and just in time to see me timber out! My timbers are getting nice and hot in the steam-box. The first batch has steamed two hours now and I guess we'll turn to and try one of 'em.

"Are you men all ready there? And are you sure you put plenty of potash in the box?"

"Yes, Sam, all ready, and I put in plenty of lye. They ought to be nice and tough," one of the men answered.

"Well, here goes, then," said the boat-builder, as he opened the slide in the end of the box and whipped out a timber so hot he had to wear mittens to handle it. The boss passed the timber to a man inside the framework of the sloop, who stepped the heel of the timber into a square mortise cut out of the thick upper part of the

keel, while he pressed the soft oak, as pliable as leather, into the curve of the bilge by treading it with his feet. The man outside began fastening the hot timber and drew it into place with screw clamps which brought it down snugly against the ribbands, small strips of wood extending from bow to stern.

"You see, sonny," Mr. Elwell explained, "this little vessel — for she's really too large to be called a boat — resembles a dummy craft or a cage at this stage. In shipbuilding the timbers are sawed out to suit the curves of the ship's surfaces; here we bend them and save a sight of time and material. We use straight sticks of white oak butts — if we can get 'em — for the butt end of any tree makes the toughest bending stock. If we can do no better, yellow-bark oak 'll do very well. But never use the high-priced soft oak for bending, although there's a dark-colored tough oak from Kentucky that bends admirably.

"But come in any time. I'll soon have you so you c'n build a vessel yourself. And anyway I'll be glad to see you."

"Thank you," answered Gus. "I've learned a lot."

There is a certain well-nigh irresistible fascination about a boat shop, and, as it was a rainy day, there was a considerable crowd of onlookers. Just as Gus was starting to go, he heard a feeble voice coming from the doorway. All hands turned in that direction and saw a little old man, neatly dressed and wearing a semi-military black, soft hat.

He was all of eighty years and with his well-combed Burnside whiskers, clean-shaven chin, and general air of respectability, a stranger would not have noticed anything unusual about him, if he had not seen fit to announce his arrival as he did.

"I take my whiskey straight — I do," was his tremulous declaration.

After unburdening himself to this extent, he waved a small cane as if it were a sword and he were leading his troops in a charge.

Most of the men smiled and winked at each other, and one of them shouted:

"Been to Boston to-day, haven't you, El?"

The little old man hunched one shoulder, took an unsteady step towards the speaker, and then, giving his cane a military flourish, said:

"I heard you distinctly — I did. I rode to Boston — but — oh, we-well, I only went up to get a little med-i-cal advice."

He brought this out with sarcasm and a sneer.

Most of the men laughed, but Mr. Frame looked pained, and said to Gus:

"I'm very glad to see that you don't laugh at El Higgins. He comes from a fine family and he's really an intelligent man. His son's a famous surgeon up at Boston."

Just then the idler who was leading Mr. Higgins on for the amusement of the crowd asked:

"How'd yer find young El? Was he all right?"

"We-ll," drawled the old man, "my boy is un-alterably opposed to having me make my appearance at his office if I've had a drink — he is. I made up my mind not to take anything before I called at his office, but I met Colonel Bloodgood of our regiment — and he promised he wou-ld not mention the army at all. But he introduced me to a bartender and said, 'I ha-ve seen this little feller lick his weight in wildcats — I ha-ve.'

"Oh, we-ll," with a wave of his cane, "my boy said, 'Father you'd better lie down and take a nap.'

"He tried to ease me down by giving me a cigar, but I said to him, 'Eldridge, you ha-ve cost me more money than all the rum I ever drank!' I put him through college — I did."

Here Mr. Elwell interrupted:

"Mr. Higgins, I shall want you in about ten days or a couple of weeks to plane off this sloop. There'll be nothing very particular about it, for she's for partying and shore fishing."

"Oh, we-ll, you just leave that to El Higgins. He'll give her the 'East Boston clip' — He will."

"You'll be sure to come and plane this packet, won't you?" urged Mr. Elwell. "And by all means come on an even keel."

"You-will-be-surprised — you will — at how sober El Higgins'll show up. It'll be business — strictly business, for I sh'll step on the little staging as white as a lily — I shall. And I'll show them conclusively what kind of trees make shingles! When they want anything done *right*, they always send for El Higgins — they do!"

"It's really remarkable," said the boat-builder, "how you do such elegant work — and you so old!"

"Yes," said the aged joiner, "Hugh Parsons told me personally — he did. He said, 'Mr. Higgins, it is true — it is, you're getting to be an old man — you are. Yet, in many ways, you retain your mechanical instincts — you do.' Hugh Parsons told me this personally — he did, and I don't know but he was more than half right.

"Anyway, Sam Elwell, did you ever *see* a man, or did you ever *hear* of a man who could say there was the first thing the matter with El Higgins — physically?"

"No, Eldridge, you're all right," answered Mr. Elwell,

who knew how conceited the old man was. "You certainly do most excellent work."

"Yes, even my daughter says, 'Father, whatever you do, you do it we-ll.'"

"Then you'll surely come when we're ready?" asked Mr. Elwell, moving slightly as if to end the interview.

"Undoubtedly," answered the old joiner, "and now I guess I'll go home and open a bottle of — ink."

"Good day, El, and don't go up after medical advice too often," said the builder, jokingly.

As soon as El Higgins had gone, walking more or less "in short hitches," as one of the fishermen said, Mr. Frame remarked to Gus:

"Most people would think that a boy shouldn't see what we've just seen. I've thought it over carefully and I'm inclined to believe that there couldn't be a better illustration of the folly of drinking. I'm pleased to see that you didn't take part in the laughing and general jollification over the old man's condition."

"My mother taught me never to laugh at any one that's drunk. She said they were more to be pitied. But, Mr. Frame, that was the old man I found sleeping in the flywheel!"

"Yes, I know, my boy. Mose told me and I'm in hopes, old as this man is, to add him to my list. All I've got to do is to get his strong will at work in the right direction. I've always felt sorry for El's one failing, for if he'd never drank, he'd have been a famous man. His name is mentioned in history for conspicuous bravery in battle and it's a fact that he was promoted several times only to be reduced again. He's the soul of honor and the finest plane-maker and outboard joiner in the country. His word is as good as his bond."

After supper that evening, Gus started for East Gloucester to deliver a package for Mrs. McKenzie, and on the way, he met the crowd of boys who went swimming in Niles's Pond. There was a lot of hooting and yelling, while one boy, who seemed to be the leader, had a a couple of dead cats tied together. As soon as he spied Gus, he shouted:

"Come on, we're going to have some fun!"

Just then Bat, Scoop and Lumpy joined the party and asked:

"What's up?"

There was so much noise and confusion that no one could get any idea of what was intended, so the crowd followed the leader. Up the hillside they went until the leader halted near a small cottage that had been built for an artist.

"Listen, fellows," he said. "Old El Higgins has been to Boston and he's just gone into his shanty — I saw him. He had a heavy list to starboard and was three sheets in the wind. I'll skip up and make these cats fast to his door knob and knock, and then run and hide. He's too drunk to catch us. Now, you fellows, crouch behind that stonewall — I'll do the rest."

"I wouldn't do that, Bing, if I were you," expostulated Gus.

"Aw sure! Don't we want some fun?" Bing answered.

"There isn't much fun that I can see in teasing an old man!"

"Go on! Of course there is!"

"I don't see it."

"Well, let's put it to a vote then."

"But the old man'll hear us, if you and Gus talk so loud about it, Bing," suggested a boy called Buster.

"Aw, he's deaf as a haddock! He can't hear anything," said Bing. "Let's put it to a vote."

"Fellows," Gus shouted.

Just then the door of the shack opened and El Higgins appeared, drunker than ever. Hunching up one shoulder he stood on his little porch, gave a military wave with his hand, and said,

"They forget-hic-they do, that quite often — El Higgins hears distinctly what they say. And-young-fellow," looking at Gus, "you and I are — going to be friends. I've met you before — I have."

On the way home, they met Bat's father who stopped and asked what Gus had done to the boat and what his plans for race day were.

"You fellows in on this race business, come along over to the house with us," said Bat.

When they were all seated in the Wonson sitting room, the burly captain asked:

"Now, then, Gus, what's your campaign?"

"Why, to sail the boat the best we know how and to try to win."

"There's more to it than that, my son, and I'm glad this no'the-easter's kept me home so I can give you some pointers. They used to get me to sail their yachts for 'em in the races and I almost always landed first. But it was so fascinating I gave it up, for fear it would interfere with the business the other owners and I were engaged in.

"Now remember this, sonny; it's probably going to blow just as hard to-morrow as it does to-day, and the fellow who has nerve and can make his boat go to wind-'ard will win.

"You start off the club-house and sail to and around

a barrel in Fresh Water Cove, leaving it on your port hand; then to and around the buoy on Round Rock Shoal, leaving it, also, to port, then home and over the course again.

"Take plenty of lunch with you; go down early, take both sails along, and some spare six- and nine-thread rope. I'll give you two quarter-inch steel wire pendants that have a tiny tackle on their ends and you'd better use them as shrouds and you c'n make the little tackles fast to the openwork gun'ls.

"Give yourself plenty of time to get back to the starting-place, and run down to the loo'ard mark and try her with the whole crew. But don't make many tacks before you run over to Black Bess Point and leave one hand. Then try her again by the wind, and, if you think she'll stand it, leave out another hand. In this way, you can tell just about what weight she needs to make her travel.

"Then worry on back to the club; don't talk, but keep your eyes and ears open, and be on hand near the line when it's time for your starting gun.

"I'll be on the club float and any more tips that I think necessary, I'll give you before you start. Gracious! If you win this race, what a story I'll have for Archie when I rejoin the fleet!"

Chapter XI

THE RACE

FISHERMEN are good hands at foretelling the weather and the captain of the *Delia I. Matheson* was no exception. So it was not surprising that when Gus looked out of the window on race day, he saw exactly what had been predicted. The outlook was for a continuation of the bad weather of the past few days.

"I do hope you boys will be careful," said Mrs. McKenzie, as Gus brought in the firewood. "It's still blowing dreadfully. I think they ought to postpone the race."

"Oh, I'll be careful, but I guess they'll have the race all right. I'm told the only thing that ever holds them up is fog or a calm."

"Well, if you must race, do try to be cautious. I suppose I shouldn't worry, for Captain Wonson told me you sail a boat with great skill.

"But what in the world are you going to do with so many boys, Gus?" as a crowd, including not only the crew but the whole mob of the cat episode, came into the yard.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered the young skipper.

"Oh, we won't bother any, ma'am," said Bing Babson. "We're great hands at putting everything to a vote and we voted to do all we can to help Gus and the *Waterwitch* to win, so we're going to help carry her down the beach and put her in the water. By and by we're going to walk over to the club and see her sail the race."

"That's fine of you, fellows," declared Gus, "for I was afraid we might scratch her launching on rollers."

In next to no time at all the *Waterwitch* was turned on a soft tarpaulin and was soon bobbing up and down on the ruffled waters of the cove. As the wind blew dead on end, they had to drop a small dory anchor out to windward and lead the rode to the boat's quarter, so she could lie at the float stage without chafing her side.

"By George, fellows!" Gus exclaimed suddenly. "It's stopped raining! I hope the rain'll hang off. I don't care a rap how hard it blows — only that it makes Mrs. McKenzie worry — for this little packet's good for it, but it isn't very nice to be out all day in the rain."

"Here comes Single Reef Charlie, fellows," shouted "Rock Cod." "I'll bet he's bound here."

True enough, Captain Wonson opened the gate and after a few words with his friend's wife at the kitchen door was soon on the landing. The boys shared with their elders on both sides of the harbor a great admiration for the man who was so noted for cracking on that for years he had been known by the descriptive title shouted by "Rock Cod." It probably originated in the fact that the doughty skipper rarely carried any snugger sail than that indicated by his nickname.

"Now, Gus," began the captain, "lay both masts side by side and I'll see if those wire shrouds'll fit both spars. In case of accidents to one rig, you want to be prepared to shift to the other at a moment's notice."

The shrouds were fitted to the small mast and the mast stepped.

"Can you short splice or make a grommet, sonny?" asked the captain.

"I've known how for a long time, sir."

"Very well, then. You make a grommet out of this new piece of twelve-thread — I'll make one on the other side."

When the grommets were finished, they reeved, or tucked, one bight up through, the two bights were brought together, the little tackle hooked on, and the rigging set up.

"Now," said the Captain, "she'll stand as many boys on her weather rail as you care to put there, and the stick'll stay in her."

"I don't see but we're about ready to stow our lunch and water-jug and be off," said the young commander.

The young skipper took his place at the helm, while Bat, Lumpy, and Dogger sat amidships, with Flip on the float holding the boat's bow.

"Get aboard, Flip," said Captain Wonson. "I'll shove off when the skipper gives the word."

"Shove that centerboard down," ordered the skipper. "Stand by, Lumpy, to pass this anchor-rode to the captain; he'll make it fast to the float for us. All ready?"

"All's ready," was the answer.

"Let her go, Captain, " and with the helm a-port, the *Waterwitch* started off on the port tack.

As the sail filled, the crowd on shore gave three cheers and Mrs. McKenzie stood waving her handkerchief until they were half way out of the cove.

As she worked out, the little craft stood bolt upright except during the puffs, and it was hard to realize that one of the worst gales in years was not only in progress but was at its height.

The *Waterwitch* worked out of the cove and when

clear of the Rocky Neck Ferry landing, her skipper ordered:

"Ease the sheet gradually. Out with it till I sing out. Haul up the board. That's well with the sheet."

As these orders were executed the skipper kept the helm a-starboard, until he brought the wind from right aft, then, righting the helm, he steered a course almost dead before it. As they sped on, they began to feel the force of the wind more and more and, before Ten Pound Island was reached, the boat was rolling frightfully, with the boom tossing halfway up to the mast, as she lurched to starboard, and bringing up with a bang when she rolled to port.

"It's a good thing that sail's cut high on the clew!" chuckled Bat.

"You bet," agreed the skipper, "if it weren't, the boom'd dip in the water and we'd be in a mess."

Gus wanted to find out how rough it was in the middle of the harbor and he found it rough enough to suit the most enthusiastic admirer of that kind of sailing. Before they reached the buoy on Round Rock Shoal, the leeward mark in the race, they hauled on the wind and, with all five boys on the weather rail, the *Waterwitch* took the worst drubbing imaginable. No boat of her size could make much headway, by the wind, in such a sea. Watching his chance during a slight lull, Gus sang out:

"Ready about. Ha-rd a-lee."

The little beauty never missed stays but swung on her heel. The sheet was eased, they rounded the buoy, hauled their wind and stood towards the easterly side of the harbor.

In towards the land the water was much smoother

and the boat made fine work of it, but Gus felt convinced that, unless the wind moderated, it would be folly to sail the race with any smaller crew than the one he had.

After several short hitches Gus said:

"I'm going to stand in and land you two, Dogger and Flip. Just walk up to the club-house, keep the crowd together and tell them not to recognize us. Five minutes before our class starts, we'll shoot up and take you off."

"There's no need of our competitors knowing how much live weight we're going to carry and they'll think we're going to sail with only three, when they see us sailing round with that number. But if they see you two waiting around together, they'll probably surmise that you're going with us, so get the whole crowd down on the float. That'll throw them off their guard."

A good sailing tender of fair beam, well handled, and with plenty of weather ballast, can often beat a small yacht in a strong blow, if the sea is not too rough. Captain Wonson knew this and he also knew the skilled men the boys would have for competitors. The *Ladybug* had won the championship the past two summers with the *Pixie* or *Tike* generally in second place, but every one conceded that if it would "blow out loud" the *Hoiden* would be a likely winner.

Two o'clock came and the yachts were sent away at five-minute intervals, class by class. Even the largest sloops had three reefs in their mainsails and storm jibs for headsails. In the first class the *Noma* was dismasted at the first mark, and in the second the *Kiaki* was hove down and withdrew, nearly sinking, and had to be towed in by a motor-boat.

Captain Wonson calculated that it was blowing harder than during the forenoon and advised Gus to take Bing as well as Flip and Dogger. Of course, the owners of the other mosquito boats knew that there was a gale blowing, but they had no idea of what a sea they would meet as soon as they got out from under the lee of Ten Pound Island.

On the contrary Gus knew, and he also knew that the only way ever to beat back from the leeward mark would be to stand well in under the land of the eastern shore and make short hitches.

As the starting time for the small boats was near, the regatta committee hailed the mosquito class skippers and the chairman shouted through a megaphone,

"As there are some young boys sailing in the race and it's blowing so hard and as they probably don't know too much about handling their boats, if you are all agreed, we'll send you only once over the course. What do you say?"

Gus ran the *Waterwitch* up a little closer and shouted:

"Don't change a single thing for us, thank you. We're game."

It lacked just four minutes and a half of gun time. Gus saw that his competitors all had their reefs tied in and only two men in a boat, so he up helm, stood in and then shot up to the end of the club float. Bing, who had been told the idea by the captain, jumped aboard, followed by Flip and Dogger.

As they shoved off, the captain advised:

"Don't try to get a fancy start. Just jog close to the weather end of the line and when the gun goes, *drive her!*"

Gus followed directions. It was his first race, yet he

was absolutely cool. The other boats all tried to bunch up at the weather end, but they got there too soon and the *Waterwitch*, jogging with starboard tacks aboard, came along with her skipper busy calling out:

"Right o' way there! Right o' way!"

The other boats were on the port tack and had either to go about and be blanketed by the *Waterwitch* or go astern of her. Gus kept headway on her all the time and when nearly up to the weather end, where the *Ladybug* was in collision with the *Hoiden*, bang! went the gun, and the skipper up helm, shouting:

"We're off. Ease that sheet. That'll do. Pile up to wind'ard."

As Captain Wonson said afterwards:

"It was some sight to see such young boys go out in the lead among men who had been racing for years and their course to the barrel in Fresh Water Cove was as straight as could possibly be steered in that beam sea."

While the *Waterwitch* got the start, she was too heavily loaded to sail at her best except by the wind, and the *Hoiden*, a remarkably fast boat in a breeze, was soon on the way, followed by *Ladybug*, *Pixie*, and *Tike* in that order.

Ten Pound Island cut the full force of the wind and the *Waterwitch* seemed anchored, for the *Hoiden* overtook her and left her astern before the island was passed, as did the rest of the fleet. By the time the *Waterwitch* got out from under the lee of the island, the *Hoiden* was halfway over to the west shore and the others were well on their way.

The crew at once began to lose all interest in the race and to squirm and move about, but Gus ordered:

"A race's never lost or won till it's over. I expected

they'd beat us going free, but it takes a good boat to sail to wind'ard to-day, so pay attention and be ready to hear an order when I give it to you."

They were now clear of the island and feeling the strength of the gale more and more. The *Waterwitch* stood up to it like a major and at a clip in marked contrast to her previous sluggish behavior. But the passage across the harbor, right in the trough of the sea, was frightful, and the boys were drenched to the skin.

"We're overhauling those fellows," sang out Bing Babson.

"We sure are," said Bat.

"My, can't she climb?" added Lumpy.

The skipper said nothing. He knew that a straight line was the nearest one between two points and he had a grip with both hands on the tiller and steered a straight course. A short time after they felt the full force of the wind, they passed *Ladybug*, *Pixie* and *Tike* and they reached the mark in Fresh Water Cove just astern of the *Hoiden*.

Jibing a boat in a gale of wind requires the nicest skill, but Gus jibed around the barrel and there was not shock enough to break an egg shell.

Running dead before it, he sang out:

"Haul aft the sheet. As taut as you can get it."

Then, putting the helm the least bit to starboard, he yelled:

"Let out your sheet."

Now conditions were again adverse. The *Waterwitch* was too heavy to run fast before the wind and, although she had reached a point just after jibing, where she was almost abreast of the *Hoiden* that craft, true to her name, romped down the wind like a truant girl.

All the boys, except the serious skipper, kept up an excited conversation, although Flip and Dogger were bailing while they talked. The boat had been enveloped in flying spray all the first leg and this, combined with an occasional sea that broke right over boat and crew, had left six or seven inches of water in her.

"Gee whiz, but didn't those boats astern make bad weather of it coming over?" said Lumpy.

"Yes, but it's nothing to . . . Look! look!" exclaimed Bing, pointing astern to where the *Ladybug* was just ready to jibe around the buoy.

Bang! went her sail over from port to starboard and she broached to with the end of her boom in the water. It looked as though the *Ladybug* was out of it, for she came as near capsizing as a boat can without doing so. She had taken in a barrel of water!

While the crew of the *Ladybug* were lowering the peak and bailing out, the *Pixie* and *Tike* ran by the buoy, and, not wishing to risk jibing, came about and then squared away. Halfway down to Round Rock Shoal, the *Pixie* and *Tike* both passed the *Waterwitch*, and the *Ladybug*, now all bailed out, was fairly flying, although still bringing up the rear.

'Way ahead speeded the *Hoiden*, and soon the *Waterwitch* dropped to last place. A few minutes later the *Ladybug* took a bound into second place after overtaking and passing *Pixie* and *Tike*.

The crew of the *Waterwitch* began to get glum and it was all that Gus could do to get them interested again. Suddenly Bat exclaimed:

"There goes the *Hoiden!* She's hauling her wind!"

Sure enough, the *Hoiden*, followed by the *Ladybug*, *Pixie* and *Tike* hauled on the wind around the buoy.

The *Waterwitch* reached the buoy last and her skipper ordered:

"Down centerboard. Trim in on the sheet."

He let her come up gradually and the crew climbed up on the weather rail with their toes in the beckets. The sail was hauled in until the boom was over the quarter, when the skipper sang out:

"Avast there! That's well enough, the sheet."

"But," exclaimed Bat who was on the rope, "look where those other boats are pointing! They've got their sheets hauled flat aft!"

"I know it. What are they doing?"

"They're pointing up, that's one sure thing!"

"That's about all. They might as well be hove to," returned Gus.

The long-headed young skipper had noticed before reaching the leeward mark that his four competitors were all making the same blunder. In common with plenty of other yachtsman, they were more familiar, with sailing in smooth water and summer breezes than in the conditions they were in now, and they were trying to sail too fine with the result that they were hardly sailing at all.

The *Waterwitch* with her crew of six stood up well and being sailed a couple of points wider than the others she was getting into smoother water all the time. In a few minutes she began to hit up something like the burst of speed she had shown on the first leg. Straight in almost to Black Bess she sped, when Bat, the pilot, said,

"Better go round."

"Ready about. Ha-rd-a-lee," ordered the skipper, and the little craft spun around and stood away from shore on the starboard tack.

They had not been on this tack long when Bat yelled:

"Skates and dogfish! We'll cross their bows."

And true enough, for presently they were almost on top of the leader of the bunch — the *Hoiden*. It looked as though a collision was to take place, for the man sailing the *Hoiden* thought, perhaps, that the boys would give in at the last minute and go around. But he was mistaken, for Gus shouted:

"Right o' way, there! Right o' way!"

The man saw that the boys knew what they were about, put his helm down at the last minute, and brought his boat on to the other tack and under the lee of the *Waterwitch*.

The gale now increased in strength, but the *Waterwitch* made fine weather of it after disposing of the *Hoiden*, and soon had the race all to herself. She was never headed; she was sailed admirably, and so poorly, did the other boats stand the drive to windward that when Gus rounded the flag to go over the course again, there was great cheering from the spectators.

The passage across was made in record time and the *Waterwitch* got so far ahead that when she turned the mark at Fresh Water Cove, the *Hoiden* was only rounding the flag at the Yacht Club.

Down the wind went the *Waterwitch*, but this time her prudent skipper took no chances and went about instead of jibing. When near the leeward mark the *Hoiden* had gained considerably but barring accidents she was a hopelessly beaten boat, while nothing could be seen of the *Ladybug* at all and *Pixie* and *Tike* had not reached Fresh Water Cove.

After hauling the wind at Round Rock Shoal buoy, Gus pursued his former tactics, sailed a bit wide and

kept in where the water was smoother, with the result that when he was nearly ready to scoot across the finish line, Bat, who was looking astern, exclaimed:

"Gee whiz, we win by just a solid mile!"

Bang! went the cannon, one second later, as the *Waterwitch* shot over the line, amid yells, tooting of horns and cheers. They had won their maiden race!

Chapter XII

THE HOME-MADE SKIFF

ALTHOUGH stiff and sore from their drenching and pounding, the boys gathered on the piazza at Snug Harbor early next morning and sailed the race over again. They reviewed its every incident and episode.

"Wasn't Bat's father tickled?" exclaimed Scoop.

"And did you hear Gus holler when the captain shook his hand and hauled him out of the boat?" asked Lumpy.

"And what a noise! What a tooting when Bing's gang got to blowing on the biggest fish-horns they could get!" added Dogger.

"Gee, but 'twas great!" confirmed Flip.

"And didn't that man who said 'They probably don't know too much about handling their boat' feel cheap? But he came up fair and square and honest and acknowledged his mistake just the same! He's a brick!" declared Bat.

"Did any one hear what became of the *Ladybug?*" asked Gus.

"Yes, I did," said Scoop. "While you fellows were beating up the harbor, I heard a man say, 'She's capsized!' A motor boat picked up the crew and towed the wreck in to Packard's Landing."

"We beat the *Pixie* and *Tike* over a mile and a half. They hadn't reached the loo'ard mark when we finished," Bat asserted.

"Gee," exclaimed Lumpy, "we're getting just like Uncle El Higgins! He fights the battles of the Civil War over again every time anything reminds him of them."

Gus now set to work and enlarged the plan, or, in the language of the shipyard, laid down the lines for the proposed skiff on heavy sheathing-paper. Then he cut out the paper patterns, or moulds, took them down to the *Waterwitch* and sailed over to Frame and Patten's.

But he was unprepared for the reception that awaited him, for the feat of the boys winning the race in a gale of wind was the talk of Gloucester. Along the wharves and at the railways they were considered little short of heroes. All the carpenters, caulkers and painters left whatever they were doing to grasp Gus by the hand and say:

"Well done, sonny! Bully for you!"

Good old Mr. Frame was so delighted he could hardly express himself at all and made Gus go to the office and give all the particulars. After the old gentleman had heard a detailed account of the victory and had smoked a pipeful of tobacco, he said:

"Good for you, my son! But I see you've got your moulds with you, so let's go down in the yard and pick out some hack-knees."

They selected suitable knees and carried them to Mose to band-saw. As they were marking out the shapes from the moulds, Gus remarked,

"How light these timbers'll be!"

"Yes," answered Mr. Frame, "hackmatack is the lightest frame you can get and as these are well seasoned, they're particularly so. These knees are from the juniper tree, which some call the tamarack, but we call it hackmatack or hack."

In short order Mose sawed and re-sawed the frames and ran them through the planer.

"Now don't be bashful about bringing anything over," said Mr. Frame, as Gus was leaving. "Mose'll saw out anything for you or run it through the planer, 'n' welcome."

"Thank you, sir, very much."

Gus lost no time in sailing back with his frames and mooring the *Waterwitch* and furling her sail. Then he hurried into the shop and up in the loft where he picked out two country-pine boards with the bark on their edges. Next, he got boards for the bottom and placed them all at one side of the building where they would be handy. Now he was ready to make a stem and transom, or sternboard. This was easy, for the stem was merely a piece of two-by-four spruce joist, beveled off to a knife edge. The transom was just a pine board seven-eighths of an inch think, but it had to be cut just the right length and have just the right bevel to the ends and bottom edge, the bevels being obtained from the full-size plan.

He had just finished this job, when his friends came tearing in.

"Hurrah for the skiff!" shouted Bat, tossing his cap in the air, as he bounded into the boathouse.

"Gus has got started, fellows," sang out Lumpy, who was second with Scoop, Bing, Flip and Dogger close on his heels.

"Now what can we do to help the job?" asked Scoop.

"Yes, what can we do?" echoed the others.

"Listen!" said Gus. "Bat and Lumpy, you two bring the *Waterwitch* into the float and take her mast, sail, and rudder out of her, while the rest of you carry these pine boards down and pass them aboard the boat.

I want these boards taken down to Frame and Patten's. When you get there, ask Mose, the mill man, to run them through the planer till they are five-eighths thick."

"Ay, ay," answered Bat and Lumpy, almost in one breath.

"While you two are gone, we'll be dressing the inside edges of the frames," explained the boss.

Now began a busy three days under Gus's direction, for he now made good use of the information he had picked up by his visits to boat-shops and shipyards. The frames were joinered, the bottom boards carefully matched, special attention being paid to have the seams leave an opening easy to caulk so that the boat would be watertight, and the middle line of the craft fixed at just nine-sixteenths of an inch away from a joint, so, as Gus said:

"If we ever decide to put a centerboard in her, one side of the slot won't have to be cut out."

"Gee!" exclaimed Bing. "It's safe to say that none of us would have thought of that!"

The stem and stemboard were set in place and the frames fastened to them.

"There, fellows," said Gus, straightening up from examining the bottom boards, "everything's squared up and already to receive the planking. She begins to look like something, doesn't she?"

"You bet! She's going to be a pippin!"

"And she's going to be as light as a feather," added Gus, "for I've kept the size and thickness of everything down to the limit. Then, too, everything in her'll be thoroughly seasoned and that'll help."

The work was nearly done, and the crew burst in one morning to find Gus finishing the top streak. They

tossed their baseball outfit into the corner at the end of the bench and began to jabber as usual. They had been so impatient to see what the skiff would look like, that they had wanted to slap the boards around her at once without regard to the why and wherefore of the operation. But Gus had prevented this and had insisted that the planks be placed as the boat builders and shipwrights work by shaping it to the mould and clamping them on. Then came the final planking and they would have whacked the nails in without boring for them, if Gus had not stopped them.

"You must bore with a bit a trifle smaller than the nail," he said, "because if the nail goes in too loosely, she'll leak. On the other hand, if you don't bore at all, you'll burst a chunk off the inside of the plank with the same result."

Gus paired off the six boys, equipped each set of partners with nails, hammer and set and hold-on iron, and they turned to and had the planks fastened in record time.

"Huh!" exclaimed Bat, "I might have known when I saw that top streak that she'd be some like a Whitehall. Hey, Gus?"

"Yes, you've hit it just right, Bat."

"But what in time's a Whitehall?" asked Bing, who by common consent had become one of the crew.

"Well, I didn't know myself till Gus told me the other day. You tell him Gus," said Bat.

"No, you do it, and then I'll see if you remembered what I told you."

"Here goes then: a Whitehall's a narrow sharp-floored row or sailboat that's always planked smooth seam, with the exception of the top streak which laps on to the one below, called the binding streak."

"Bully! exclaimed Gus. "You've got it word for word, but I'll add that these handsome boats are fast disappearing. The motor boats prevent their being built, so my father told me, and he could remember when there was a large fleet of them at the Battery in New York and at Lewis's Wharf in Boston. The deep water boarding houses sent men outside in them to meet incoming ships and get boarders for the houses. The *Waterwitch* is a modified Whitehall, only she's slightly flatter and wider.

"But come on! Let's haul out the *Waterwitch* and turn her over for drying and smoothing — then have a swim."

They were admiring their handiwork after the swim, when a kindly voice hailed them:

"So this is the new shipyard, is it? Ha! ha! ha! Let's see what you've done?"

Mr. Frame came in and after he had given the new skiff a thorough inspection he turned to Gus and declared:

"Well, my son, she's a little beauty! Splendid! It's little short of marvelous. The work's done admirably and has none of the earmarks of the amateur!"

"But, sir," said Bat, who always believed in fair play, "it's all due to Gus. We only helped."

"They all did a lot of it, believe me, Mr. Frame!" protested the boy builder.

"Yes, with you to tell us how and to keep us from spoiling her," rejoined Bat.

"Well, well," Mr. Frame suggested, "we won't quarrel over it. But there's the whistle blowing, so let's go to dinner."

"And this afternoon," said Gus turning to his crew, "we'll sand paper the *Waterwitch* for the next race is to-morrow."

Chapter XIII

THE *WATERWITCH* SAILS IN LIGHT AIR

GUS was carrying an armful of wood the next morning, when he was hailed from across a vacant lot by Palmer Tabling.

There are sailmakers in Gloucester just as there are in every seaport town, but if one asked for a representative firm, he would probably be told:

"Go to Leech and Roach's if you want the last word in style, fit and set. And, brother, if yer wants a sail as is a sail, be sure the foreman, Palmer Tabling, cuts it fer you. I'll bet he could cut 'n' make a sail from burlap that'd win a race!"

"Good morning," Mr. Tabling greeted Gus. "I want to talk with you. Of course I've heard how you boys won the race in that gale. But I shouldn't have thought of what I'm going to propose if it hadn't have been for the fact that I happened to look over your way as I was carrying an armful of wood and noticed you were doing the same thing. So I said to myself, 'I wonder if those boys can win to-day?' It looks as though it might be moderate."

"It occurred to me to offer you a large sail that's all bent to its spars. It's down in my shed there. It's one I made for my own use when I had the boat fever, and it belonged on a fifteen footer I lost in a fire.

"You may have this sail as a present, for I believe that a boy who has the sand to sail an open boat on a

day like last Saturday shouldn't be hampered by a lack of canvas."

"You're very, very kind, sir!" Gus exclaimed. "And I thank you ever so much."

"Don't mention it, my boy. Just go and take the sail."

As Gus lifted the sail and spars, he exclaimed:

"Gracious, but it's nice and light!"

"Yes, it is light. The mast and boom are hollow, and as you must keep hollow spars well varnished, there's a tiny pendant and jig to keep the snotter up, for wetting won't prevent it from slipping down on so smooth a spar.

"The sail's an overgrown one for your boat. It's what the yachtsmen call 'cross-cut' and has all the cloths running square to the leech. It's made of specially woven cloth that is so light and thin it'll fill when you can't see any wind. Yet if it should breeze up, it'll set as well as common sails that are three times as heavy. I made the large sail you've been using in light breezes, so I happen to know that this one has five yards more cloth in it."

"Well, this ought to do the business, if it's very light air," said Gus, as he shouldered the outfit and started for home.

The crew were on hand before Gus could get the sheet loosened, for it had been wound around the sail for a gasket when it was last furled.

"Gee whiz! Where'd you raise the big sail?"

"Gosh! I don't think she'll carry it!"

"I bet half the boom'll be over the stern!"

"Will she steer with all that after-sail?"

"Well," Gus acknowledged, "I'm pretty sure she's

got too much after sail. But two of us'll sail her down the cove, for I want to ask Mr. Frame's advice and show him the rig."

Lumpy was the logical one to go, for, if a puff was about to hit her, he would do more good on the weather rail than any of the others. With a gentle breeze over the port quarter, they glided down the cove, but the skipper had to order the crew to sit well aft and even then it was hard to keep the boat's head from coming up into the wind.

The rest of the crew reached Frame and Patten's just as the *Waterwitch* with Mr. Frame at the helm and Lumpy for crew was starting out for a trial spin.

The veteran tried the boat at all points of sailing and then shot her up to the stage.

"I'll fix her," he said. "Here, Peter, call three of the men."

The boat was hauled on to the wharf, carried to the shop and blocked up on an even keel.

"Now, Peter," commanded the builder, "you and Dan are good at this light, neat work; bring your boxes up and one of you rip out her breast-hook and put in the toughest piece of seasoned pasture oak you can find. Have it come eight inches abaft the fore side of the stem. Cut a half mast hole in the after edge. I'll get Mose to make a half-band or latch so the mast can be stepped easily.

"Now one boy come along with me. I think Sam Elwell has a rudder just about large enough to use with that sail, and he'll have to give it to us."

Mr. Elwell was delighted to help out, and Dan soon had the rudder, which had been on a small catboat, rehung on the *Waterwitch*.

While the work was going on, Mr. Frame said to the waiting boys:

"You boys might have been able to do this mast-stepping job, if you had time enough, but it'll need more than relocating the position of the mast to make her steer. This barndoor rudder'll do the trick, for to get all the speed out of the boat, the rudder must remain as nearly in a line with the middle of the boat as possible. The old rudder would have to be kept hard across all the time in order to control her.

"Well, here's Mose with the band. That looks fine, Mose! Lay it on there — just right — diameter and all! I do believe Mose can make anything."

When it was time to bore the new step, Mr. Frame stood off and sighted the auger, and was very insistent that it should rake the least bit forward.

"Now, Peter," he said, "slap a couple of hack knees on to the after edge of that new breasthook and have the arms reach pretty well aft."

In a short time the *Waterwitch* was afloat again. The mast was stepped in its new location, right in the eyes of her, and Gus and Lumpy got aboard. She was shoved off and, with only his little finger, on the tiller, her skipper sailed about the cove. It was evident that her speed had been increased wonderfully.

"She really is a water-witch to-day," Gus remarked, as he stepped on to the float. "She's balanced perfectly, for if anything she carries the last bit of lee helm in this zephyr. But that can be remedied by listing her down to loo'ard and you have to do that in a light air anyway to make the wind stay in the sail."

"You have the right idea, Gus," said Mr. Frame, "but now we know that she's all right, let's plan out our

campaign. You have plenty of time left, of course, and you could go down to the club now or after dinner. But 'twould be unwise to show the large sail any more than you've done, for you don't want all your competitors to go borrowing catboat sails all over town.

"Here's what I propose. You boys skip home now and get your dinners and I'll do the same. At about half past one, I'll tow you down with our motor-boat, but you must have the boat rigged with what used to be her large sail, and, of course, the mast ought to be in the hole where it used to go — in the boat's thwart."

"You aren't going to take all this crowd of boys, are you, Mr. Frame?" asked Lumpy.

"Why not? I like boys, and the motor-boat'll hold 'em. I shall enjoy the race much better with company."

At the appointed time the motor-boat tooted her whistle and started off with the saucy *Waterwitch* towing astern on a short painter. As there was time to spare, Mr. Frame thought it a good idea to run down the harbor and see how much wind there was.

The launch was stopped and Gus wet his finger and held it up to feel the breeze — what there was of it. Then he took a look at the binnacle and remarked:

"This little air's just about sou'west by west and they'll send us down to Round Rock Shoal first. It'll be dead to wind'ard the first leg."

"Right you are, my boy. I see you know the compass. But we'd better get up harbor again — over near the club — for it's too late now for your rivals to change their rigs and we don't care now how soon we change ours."

Mr. Frame ran the launch alongside the club float, when Uncle El Higgins emerged from the crowd of spectators and addressed Gus:

"This wind'll peter out before you've sailed a half hour — I'll bet you four dollars it will!"

This dogmatic prediction brought loud hoots from the boys, so Uncle El called Gus one side and went on:

"When you sail, keep looking every once in a while to the east'ard. When this breeze dies out, it may be calm for half an hour, but it'll come from the east'ard—it will!"

When Gus told Mr. Frame what Uncle El had said, the shipwright declared:

"I agree. It's just what we old people would expect on a warm day like this, when it's been next to calm with what little wind there's been since morning from the south'ard 'n' west'ard. Besides, El Higgins is nearly always right in his predictions."

Attention was now focused on a boat with a new sail of very large size, and Bat sang out:

"It's the *Ladybug!* I just heard her owner say, 'I'll win to-day for she's a flyer in a light chance, and I've got a surprise to spring on 'em at the last minute!'"

"Well, let him spring it!" exclaimed the loyal Lumpy, as he took his place in the boat with Gus.

As Gus had thought, the judges sent them away to windward for the first leg. The wind was very light, but the *Waterwitch* glided away from the float as though she needed no wind at all. When she was a few feet towards the starting line, a tremulous voice piped:

"It'll do as I said it would — it will!"

Gus knew that if there was to be a shift of wind, it would be wise to try to be in a position when it changed to get the new breeze before his rivals did. So he instructed Lumpy to keep his eyes peeled.

Thirty seconds before the gun for the mosquito boats to start, the *Waterwitch* was jogging on the starboard

tack and was about three boat lengths from the flag at the westerly end of the line. Then came the orders:

"Let your sheet out. There, stand by to haul in, but don't jiggle the boat, and . . . Haul in! Haul in! Only five seconds more!"

Bang! and the *Waterwitch* with her skipper and crew crouched down, only their heads showing above the gunwale, shot into first place.

The other boats were bunched at the other end of the line, and when they began to straighten out, it was apparent that the *Ladybug* was fast leaving the others. They were all on the port tack, for it was a trifle shorter distance to the first mark and they wanted to get out into the middle of the harbor where the ebb tide would shove them to windward.

The *Waterwitch* and the *Ladybug* almost met, but when a collision seemed inevitable, Gus sang out:

"Right o' way, there!"

And the *Ladybug* went around.

Meanwhile the *Hoiden*, *Pixie*, *Tike*, and a newcomer were having a struggle all by themselves and seemed to be trying to make for the middle of the harbor.

The *Ladybug* was gradually dropping her opponents and presently Lumpy exclaimed:

"She's gone round!"

"Let her go! I know it's not a good plan to let your competitor split tacks, if you're beating him, but I've got great faith in what Uncle El said, and we'll favor this side of the harbor, working down."

When the *Waterwitch* went on the port hitch at last, it was apparent that the other boats had gained by standing on a long westerly board, for the tide was a great help. But Gus stuck to his policy and only re-

mained on the port tack for a short time, before he up helm and let her go towards the east again.

Both boys kept looking to the eastward, and at last Lumpy exclaimed:

"Gee! These light air races get on my nerves! Those boats are nearly down to the turning mark, at least the *Ladybug* is, and the others aren't far from it. I'm afraid they're going to do us."

Gus went about and could see for himself that the *Waterwitch* had fallen far behind, but he merely said:

"Keep a good look out for an easterly."

"It'll be the only salvation for any of us," said Lumpy, "for, see, they've lost the wind entirely!"

"Well, we haven't yet," answered the skipper, as, using the last remaining catspaw, he ordered:

Ready about. Ha-rd-a-lee."

As they fanned along in towards Black Bess, Lumpy sang out:

"The *Ladybug* has been swept past the turning mark, but on the wrong side of it. The tide'll carry her out to sea, if a breeze doesn't come."

"Hurrah!" shouted Gus. "A breeze, as sure as we're here."

"Why? Where, Gus?"

"Why, don't you see the Stars and Stripes over on the hotel at Bass Rocks? It's streaming out! The wind's from the east'ard! Let's see how long we've been out. It's just half an hour by my watch. El Higgins must be a wizard!"

They were now in a stark calm, but in a few minutes a blue streak rippled the water and in no time the *Waterwitch* with centerboard hauled up was tearing along dead before it for Round Rock Shoal.

The *Pixie*, *Tike* and *Nifty* — the new boat — had all been swept past the buoy, although not so far out as the *Ladybug*, but all four were becalmed, while the *Waterwitch* went along like a ship in a trade wind bringing the breeze along with her.

Now they were at the buoy, and the skipper ordered:

"Stand by. Down board. Trim in and get to wind'ard."

With the wind just forward of the beam and the two boys leaning well back on the weather rail, the *Waterwitch* fairly leaped along the course to the next mark.

"They've got the wind, now!" exclaimed Lumpy, as he trimmed in the sheet to the skipper's liking, "and they're just pelting. It's taken the *Ladybug* no time at all to pass the others and round the buoy properly. I tell you she's after us — red hot!"

"There go the others around the mark!" he continued, now thoroughly excited, "but we've got a good lead and it's up to us to keep it."

The boats retained their relative positions all along this leg, and, presently, the *Waterwitch* rounded the barrel in Fresh Water Cove, and headed for the starting point. It was a long hitch and a short one now, and Gus held on to the long one for some time to get across the strong ebb tide as quickly as possible. When at last he decided to go round, the others were also by the wind, with the *Ladybug* heading the rest. But the *Waterwitch* still had a handsome lead.

Gus managed to lee-bow the tide, on a short hitch, and then drove the *Waterwitch*, with a bone in her teeth, for the turn of the flag.

"Do we hold our lead?" asked the skipper as they rounded the mark, eased the sheet and ran for the outer mark with the wind over her port quarter.

"Yes we've gained a lot," answered the crew.

The breeze was true and steady and the *Waterwitch* fairly romped over the course. But when she had only a couple of cable lengths farther to go, Lumpy exclaimed excitedly,

"Look, look at the confounded power-seiner, Gus! Can we cross her bow?"

"Perhaps we can. Anyway, power gives way to sail; so here goes!"

Along came the huge tub, her twin screws driving her at least eight miles an hour. Now she had left the narrow channel between Ten Pound Island and the Yacht Club. Her helmsman never shifted her course. Could the *Waterwitch* squeeze by?

It was an anxious moment for the boys and to the spectators on the float. The sail-boat did squeeze by with a bare inch to spare at her boom-end, when Gus and Lumpy exclaimed as with one breath:

"Tim Rafferty!"

The next moment there was a crash. The *Waterwitch* was cut from her gun-wale to the water's edge by a large sein-boat that was being towed alongside the seiner.

Gus jumped just in time to save himself from possible death as the sein-boat plowed over them. Both boys noticed the delighted grin on Tim's face, as he gripped the spokes on the seiner, while they floundered in the water.

Chapter XIV

THE LAUNCHING

"GEE, but those fellows in the *Ladybug* were good sports!" commended Lumpy next day as they gathered in the boathouse.

"They sure were," replied Gus, "and they'd have lost first place if we'd let them tow us in as they wanted to do. Why, after their kind offer I'd have pushed the wreck twice that distance if it would have let them win!"

"Same here," echoed Lumpy.

"But what's going to be done about the *Waterwitch?*" asked Flip.

"Oh, can't you guess?" Bat said, pityingly. "Why Mr. Frame, of course, yanked her up to his place astern of his motor-boat. He insisted on repairing her."

"Rafferty ought to pay the bill though!" opined Lumpy.

"Aw, what 'd he pay it with? 'With the main-top-s'l-sheet' I suppose," sneered Bat, answering his own question.

"Cut out that deep-water stuff, Bat," ordered Gus, "and we'll all turn to at skiff building."

"Ay, ay, but I'll square yards with Tim, yet," persisted Bat, the irrepressible. He was backed up by:

"That's the dope!" from the others.

Having expressed themselves as to how they felt in regard to Rafferty, they were now willing to change the subject.

"Skates and dogfish!" exclaimed Bat, "but it seems good to get at the skiff again!"

"Yes, you bet," agreed Lumpy.

"And we must finish her right up," added Gus.

"We can easily do it," Bing asserted. "What's that Bat springs about 'many hands'?"

"Aw, that's old, but it's true just the same!" Bat retorted.

"Now, let's pitch in," suggested Dogger, while Flip said, "Amen."

"Well, Scoop," announced the boss, "as you've said nothing, I'll let you finish this breast-hook and Bat and Lumpy can fit a quarter-knee each. Bing can cut a deep scull-hole, and Flip and Dogger can make a rowlock block, each, and fasten them on, while I sharpen some plane-irons for smoothing her bottom."

When the boys arrived the next day, they found that the energetic Gus had the caulking all done. He had borrowed a wheel from Mr. Elwell, turned the skiff bottom up, and made a rapid job of it with the modern caulking tool.

The boys were ready to smooth off the skiff, when they heard a familiar treble:

"I ha-ve-seen the time when I could plane more bottom than any man in Essex County — and I'm mighty proud of it, too!" Uncle El Higgins was standing just inside the door with his cane held much as he must have carried his sword in the cavalry.

"Now, let me tell you how to work at planing her off," piped the veteran. "In the first place, run your hand across the bottom and you'll find ridges at the seams. These ridges must be planed down, shoving the plane fore 'n' aft — that's squaring off — it is.

Next, you plane her diagonally across the planking and that's traverse planing. Then, you take a foreplane and plane her fore 'n' aft; after that you go over it with a joiner, set fine, so's to detect any inequalities, and she's ready for the last planing — done with a smoothing plane, using very little iron.

"Of course, you boys know that sharp tools do nice work — they do; so keep your plane irons sharp, for it doesn't pay to try and use 'em when they're dull — it does not. And be sure and remove all the plane marks with a sharp scraper.

"When you've done this, you must sandpaper 'thwartships, or across the grain, where the work's to be painted; but if it were to be varnished, you'd sandpaper fore 'n' aft, so's not to show any scratches. If you follow these directions and work carefully, you'll have a complete job — you will."

"Thank you very much," shouted Gus. "We'll try and do the work the way you've said — she'll row the easier for it."

Uncle El stayed until they knocked off for a swim, and some of the boys thought he must have been a martinet in the army he was so particular as to how they held their tools. But he ground and whetted the plane irons, and his insistence on following a workmanlike method resulted in the bottom being all joinered and ready for paint in a much shorter time than would have been the case otherwise.

"Now, fellows," Gus announced, "I've only paint brushes enough for three. What shall we do? Shall we draw numbers, or, as Bat and Lumpy live handy, have them come over?"

"I move we all come and every fellow bring a borrowed

brush," said Bing. "After she's painted on her bottom, we can turn her carefully and part of us get inside and work and the rest do the top sides."

"Second the motion," came the chorus.

"It seems to be unanimous, Bing, for they all second it," said Gus. "So, if you'll muster them around with brushes, I'll have the pots of paint ready."

Long before dark the skiff had her priming coat, and the boys one nearly as heavy. The next morning Gus slapped on a coat with plenty of japan in it, but not enough to make it blister.

"Gee whiz! What shall we do now!" exclaimed Bat as he saw the skiff shining with her coat of fresh paint.

"The best thing to do in my opinion," Gus answered, "is to take a sail in the *Waterwitch*, for if we stay here we'll be thumbing the skiff every five minutes to find out whether the paint has begun to dry."

"Right you are, as usual!" Lumpy agreed.

At last the paint was hard, and Gus went to the boat-house for rollers to place under the skiff. He was anxious to see the skiff on the water, and to try her with a pair of oars, but it occurred to him that it would be much fairer to wait until the other boys could share in the launching. So he curbed his impatience and paid a visit to the shipyard instead.

"Come aboard," shouted Mr. Frame, as Gus knocked at the door of the office.

"Well, General Jackson, how are you to-day?" he continued.

"First class, sir!"

"And how's the home-made skiff getting along?"

"She's all done and has two coats of paint on her."

"Good for you! I wish you'd row her down here and

show her to me, for, if you've kept on as you were doing when I looked in, she'll pass inspection anywhere."

"She's as smooth as a smelt! A complete job, or so at least Uncle El Higgins says, for he bossed the job of joinering off. When we launch I'll row down and show her to you."

"If El had the bossing of it, I know it's all right. He has only two failings — conceit and a weakness for alcohol. There's a man small of stature, but tough as pasture oak; honest as the days are long, the finest workman we have in these parts in spite of his eighty odd years, kind 'n' generous to a fault, and so brave he knows no fear. He comes of good family, is well read, and writes so well and is so expert at figures that they used to take him out of the guardhouse and get him to straighten out accounts when the paymasters got tangled up during the Civil War. There are probably no limits he could not have attained, if it hadn't been for liquor. I'm glad you know him for his career should be an object lesson to you.

"But let's see how much you remember about your draughting, so go to it."

"I'm sure I've remembered," Gus answered, "for I go over it nearly every morning."

Mr. Frame now showed the boy how to find the common center of an entire suit of sails and explained how, in theory, this should be exactly over the center of the profile of that portion of the hull below the load waterline. With these centers in line with each other, the vessel should, theoretically, be in perfect balance.

"But," added the veteran, "in practice it's found better to have a slight difference for reasons you'll learn after you've had a little more experience, but

one of them you know already. As the sailing craft careens, she increases her luffing tendency and is said to gripe."

"Yes, sir, I've known that for some time, and that's one reason why we list a sailboat down to loo'ard in a light breeze. It's to make her eat into the wind."

"Precisely," said the builder.

Gus was soon on his way back to Snug Harbor, where he met the crowd who shouted in one voice:

"Isn't the paint dry yet?"

"Why, yes," answered Gus.

"Why didn't you launch her then?" Bat inquired, with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Oh I thought it would be fairer for all of us to be here when she takes her first dip."

"Gee!" exclaimed Bat.

"Don't she look swell!" added Flip.

"She's what I call a little bit of all right!" said Bing Babson.

"She's a sure enough pippin!" exclaimed Lumpy, while Scoop and Dogger were equally warm in their approval of the skiff's appearance.

"But, Gus," Bat asked, "have you rollers enough, so we can place them all the way down the beach and have a regular launching?"

"We've rollers to burn, but we'll have to lay boards down first, so she can travel without a hitch, after she gets a-going."

The boat and rollers were soon in position with just enough sand behind each roller to keep it from going of its own accord. The boat was lifted, the horses pulled out, and then she was carefully lowered on to the upper set of rollers.

"She ought to have some sort of a flag on her," Scoop suggested. "Have you any, Gus?"

"Yes. Go in the boathouse and get one. They're up in the loft. I'll saw the end off this piece of pole so we can tack it with a finish nail to her bottom, and we can lash it around a thwart, too, to steady it."

"What kind of a flag shall I bring?" shouted Scoop from the door of the loft.

"There's only one flag on earth for us to launch under," Gus answered, "and it's the handsomest, too."

As Scoop appeared with a large American flag, the boys uncovered in regular navy fashion and gave three rousing cheers which brought Mrs. McKenzie to the door.

"My stars!" she exclaimed. "But you're going to have a regular launching. I'll come down."

"I shouldn't have thought of letting her slip without letting you know. I was just going up to tell you," explained the boss builder.

"Well, everything's ready. Shall we let her flicker?" Bat shouted, boisterously.

"No, she ought to be christened," Scoop suggested — he came from a ship-building town. "They generally break a bottle of wine on the bow at a launching."

"A bottle of water for us! That's strong enough!" Gus declared.

As Mrs. McKenzie broke the bottle of water on the stemhead, the skiff under the impulse of a gentle shove from the master builder started on her journey down the beach. With a splash she skimmed out until she was checked by her long painter, just in time to prevent her bumping into the *Waterwitch*.

The cheering could be heard all over the cove, but it

soon subsided when the skipper ordered them to haul her in to the float where two pairs of oars and rowlocks were put aboard. Then, with four boys rowing double banked they glided along for Frame and Patten's wharf.

"Gee, but that's some tub!" Gus exclaimed, as they passed a large burdensome fishing boat halfway down the cove.

"Yes," Bat answered, "that's the ablest and best boat in the whole Guinny fleet. There's a slew of 'em owned at the Italian settlement over 't the Fort."

"He seems to be tinkering with his engine," Scoop suggested. "He's anchored and has no tender."

"If he can't make her go, how in time's he going to get ashore?" Dogger wondered.

"Aw, someone'll bring him in, if he hails 'em," said Bat, carelessly.

They soon reached the mouth of the cove where Mr. Frame was waiting for them on his float-stage.

"So that's your little daisy, is it?" he asked. "My, but she came along with you seven in her nearly as fast as a round-bottomed keel-boat. She's a beauty. She's all right. You all deserve great credit."

"Well, fellows," Gus announced, as they rounded Five Pound Island, "let's get along towards home. I've got lots to do. But bear a hand there, fellows. That Guinny boat looks queer to me. I believe she's settled. Thunder! She's sinking."

The boys were halfway up the cove. The lone Italian seemed demented. He yelled, gesticulating wildly.

"Bet he was foolin' with the intake or stuffin' box," panted Bat, as he labored at the stroke oar. "When

the water rushed in, he got rattled 'n' didn't know what to do."

"Don't believe he can swim," opined Flip. "He's dancing 'n' jumpin' like a monkey."

"I don't either," Gus agreed. "But are we going to make it?"

The skiff was fifty feet away now. The fishing boat was nearly under.

"Lay to it, fellows," roared Gus. "What's that he's yelling?"

"Sink-a da boat! Sink-a da boat!" yelled the Italian. The stern showed only six inches now.

"Me no swim! Me no swim!" shrieked the frantic fisherman. The skiff was twenty-five feet away.

"Come on, Flip," ordered Lumpy. "We'll lighten her."

As the skiff was relieved of their weight, she shot ahead.

The stern of the motor boat was under!

"Lay to it. Drive her," came the orders.

Now they were ten feet away. The blades of the oars bent; sweat fell in great drops from the foreheads of the rowers.

Pale of face but cool, Gus urged them on — on towards the frantic foreigner.

"Way enough!" Gus yelled.

The fated craft took a plunge and shot stern first to the bottom, with her bow lifted high in the air.

The man made a mighty leap. The skiff received him in safety.

Chapter XV

THE "BOX" WINS

IN summer East Gloucester takes on an air of bustle and excitement unequalled at other times of the year. Rocky Neck in particular is gay with the throngs of artists and summer colonists who gather there to "bathe in the breezes of fair Cape Ann."

The vacant lots are green with the growth of burdock, mullein, and other weeds, while hollyhocks, sunflowers and tiger lillies adorn the yards in front of each white-painted cottage.

Here and there in the fields or on a weed-grown wharf are the fish flakes, each with its white cotton cover to keep off the strong rays of the sun, while scattered about at this wharf or that, is an occasional laid up banker. To complete the picture, stranded on the beaches between the crumbling wharves lies many a hulk between whose ancient timbers the tide swashes merrily.

This quaint old town by the sea had grown dear to Gus, though he found life far different to that which he had known in the great East Side. But he longed to be older so that he might revisit his old home and try to clear up his identity.

"Skates and dogfish!" Bat came in like a whirlwind. "There'll be a brand new boat in the mosquito class next Saturday. She's being rushed and the builders — the best around Boston — have promised

not only to ship her Friday on the Gloucester boat but that she'll clean everything out."

"Well," said Gus, thoughtfully, "we mustn't be afraid of the new boat. We'll give 'em a good tryout, even if we get licked."

"Here comes the crowd," cried Bat, "let's go down to the boats and have some fun."

"Second it," shouted Bing.

They took turns rowing the skiff, and at last Lumpy declared:

"She's the easiest skiff to row I ever saw."

"Gee!" Bat exclaimed, "I wonder how she'd — but she's got no centerboard."

"I was thinking what fun it'd be to rig her up and have a tryout with the *Waterwitch*."

"We can do it. I'll cut a mast-hole with an expansive bit in a few minutes and one of you can be making a step piece that we can screw in. I'll take a one-inch ship augur 'n' bore the step hole after the piece is fastened in," said Gus.

In half an hour's time the skiff was ready to carry a sail, and the boys were eager to rig her and be off.

"Hold on," demurred Gus. "We want a fair test. Take those two large sails up on the grass, 'n' reef the overgrown one so we can compare 'em.

"There, they're exactly a size. Now we know where we stand. Put the old one in the skiff and the one Mr. Tabling gave us in the *Waterwitch*, and we'll let two fellows go in each boat and race down to Frame and Patten's."

The two boats were brought in and held one on each side of the float stage. The sails were unbrailed together and, as Gus gave the word, the boats were released and

off they went. The skiff gathered headway as if shot out of a gun. There was a fresh breeze from the southwest which made it almost dead before it going down. Even after the heavier *Waterwitch* gathered momentum, it was obvious that she was no match for the flat-bottomed skiff.

"Gee whittaker!" Lumpy exclaimed.

"She's dusting the *Waterwitch* all to pieces," said Scoop.

"Anything can sail down hill," Gus declared.

The skiff soon reached the goal, and though her crew knew she could not sail on the wind, still for the fun of it they flattened in. She went sidewise like a crab.

Gus held the watch and timed each boat as she hauled on the wind. The skiff won by three minutes in the short distance — less than a fifth of a mile.

The boys in the skiff brailed up, unstepped the mast and rowed back to the landing. Then Gus hit on a brilliant idea.

"The test was a fair one," he said. "The fellows were very nearly matched for weight — if anything the skiff had the heavier load. Bat and Bing are larger than Flip and Dogger. But I want to try an experiment.

"While we're waiting for the *Waterwitch* to beat back, we'll take my big draughting-board and fasten it on the outside of the skiff with iron screw clamps. It'll be a long tack and a short one coming back, so the starboard tack'll be the long one. The board'll do more good on the port side."

"Hurrah! Bully for you!" Bat shouted.

The board was clamped in place in a jiffy, with its top edge under the gunwales. Everything was in readiness for the match. The boats were started exactly

as before with the same crews. The skiff hauled on the wind two minutes ahead and it was soon apparent that she was a good sailer. But it was not until the *Waterwitch* hauled her wind that they had any idea how fast the skiff was. The smooth water in the cove was just to her liking, for she looked higher and footed faster than her older sister. She made the landing in one long tack and a short one, while the trial horse took three hitches to do it.

"How much did we beat her, Gus?" asked Bat, as the *Waterwitch* shot up to the landing.

"Just seven minutes and fifteen seconds, and . . ."

"Well, I never! So you've gone and outbuilt your own little *Waterwitch!*" The speaker was Captain McKenzie, just back from a trip, and there was a riot of welcome.

"Gracious, lad," he continued when he could make himself heard. "Just put an enormous centerboard in her, 'n' sail her right, 'n' she'll be a wonder, I'm thinking. You don't mean to tell me you boys built that skiff, do you?

"When you told me about it, I thought she must be some amateurish thing, full o' hollow seams and — water. But she's all right. She's ship shape 'n' Bristol fashion, every inch of her! Boys, you've done well."

"How are you, Archie?" broke in Mr. Frame, who now came down the pier and extended his hand.

"Fine and dandy, John!" replied the giant skipper.

"Some boys, these! Hey, Archie? I've been over to East Gloucester on an errand to Finlay Archer's boatshop and while we were looking out of his door, we watched them trying out the new boat. I tell you the difference that leeboard made in her was astonishing!

"Just bring that skiff down first thing in the morning, and I'll have a couple of men slap a centerboard and box into her and make a barndoor rudder in a fraction of the time it'd take you fellows to do it."

"Yes, do, John," said the Captain, "and send the bill to me."

"I'll do nothing of the kind! That is, the bill part," answered the shipwright. "But if you boys have any more tryouts, have them early in the morning, before many folks are stirring. You must keep the skiff a dark horse!"

The boys sailed the skiff down to Frame and Patten's the next morning and the men were soon at work transforming the skiff from a mere rowing affair into a full-fledged sailing-tender. As the boys were roaming around, one of the carpenters, with a sly wink at his partner, said to Bat:

"What's a holler seam, sonny?"

"One's that larger inside than out," was the reply.

"Right you are. I wouldn't wonder but what Gus has been posting you up a little — hey?"

"Yes, sir, he has; and he says such a seam c'n only be caulked by a skilled man who c'n choke it with wads of cotton or oakum. But a hollow seam shouldn't be allowed in any boat or vessel. They're not safe."

"He knew his number, sonny, and you're both all right."

That afternoon the boys gathered at Snug Harbor but they were impatient and wanted to start for the skiff at once. They knew they could have her at three and as they started, Captain McKenzie advised:

"Better take the small sail down to use in the skiff and if you find she still beats the *Waterwitch*, why jog her."

"Ay, ay, sir," came the answer.

The skiff was ready and the two sailing-tenders were soon at it. Gus was sailing the skiff and he had to haul up her board and slack the sheet a little to hold her back, by the wind. But the boys were so anxious for a battle royal between the two boats that at last Gus announced:

"To-morrow morning at four o'clock, every fellow be here and we'll race the two boats till five. Then, we'll haul 'em both up for drying out and smoothing."

Promptly at four the crowd was there. But the race — if it could be called one — was all skiff; the outbuilt *Waterwitch* could only follow her leader.

As the boats were hauled out for drying and sandpapering, Gus said to Bat:

"Just get your father to let you enter the skiff in his name, will you?"

"Yes, I'll 'tend to it," was the answer.

Saturday came at last with a moderate breeze from the southwest and every indication of fine weather.

Gus wanted both boats to sail and have the boys draw numbers to see who would go in them, but the others, much as they liked the excitement of racing, would not hear of letting the *Waterwitch* go into the race, only to get a bad beating. So it was decided to pin their faith on the skiff, but to have the older boat available in case it should develop into a smoky southwester.

"Has any one heard whether the new boat got here yet or not?" Gus inquired, when the crew met at Snug Harbor.

"Yes," answered Flip. "I had to go on an errand over to town last night and they'd just put her overboard at the steamboat wharf and were rigging her. She's a pippin! I bet she can climb, in light air. She's a regular catboat!"

"Well, fellows, 'the proof of the pudding's the eating thereof,' so we'll probably know to-night whether we can beat her or not," Gus replied.

Just before two o'clock that afternoon, the skiff shot up to the crowded landing-stage at the Yacht Club. As the crew stepped out, Scoop said:

"Look, Gus, there's the new boat. Isn't she a beauty?"

Gus looked and sure enough three boats up — there was a whole row of all kinds of pleasure craft made fast to the ring bolts — he saw about as handsome a specimen of the boat-builder's art as he had ever seen.

The owner was the son of a wealthy summer resident, and he had a middle-aged boatman in uniform with him — probably the skipper of his father's yacht.

The secretary of the regatta committee now pushed his way through the crowd to where Bat was standing and asked:

"Now then, young man, what's the name of your boat?"

"She hasn't a name yet," was the reply.

"Well, you'll have to give her one," said the man, "for we have to turn in a summary of the race for the press."

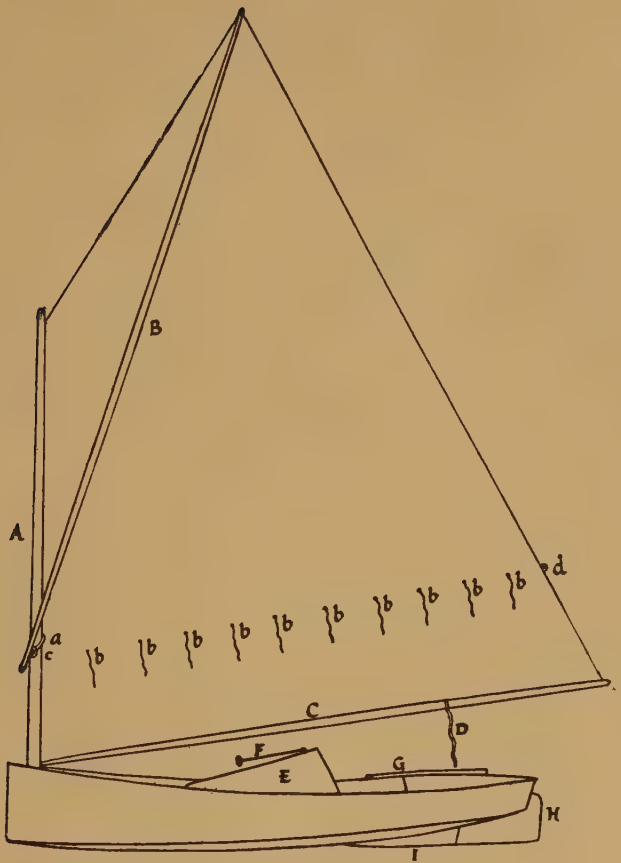
"Why don't you call it the *Box?*" suggested the supercilious young owner of the new craft.

"What's the name of yours?" asked Gus, quietly.

"*Dolly Varden.*"

"Well," Gus retorted, "we won't call ours *Becky Sharp.*"

"Think lively, boys," suggested the secretary; "decide on a name, for we've got to go out aboard the judges' boat."



A=MAST B=SPRIT C=BOOM D=SHEET E=CENTRE-BOARD
F=C-B'd HANDLE G=TILLER H=RUDDER I=SKEG
a, snotter b,b,b, reef points c, tack eyelet d, reef cringle

THE "BOX"—ROSA LEE

"Give us a name, then, Gus," urged Bat.

"Well," said Gus, "I'll make up one. If his is *Dolly Varden*, ours can be *Rosa Lee!*"

"All right," said the secretary, spelling aloud, as he wrote the name, "R-o-s-a-l-i-e."

"No, sir," Gus corrected. "R-o-s-a L-e-e; the Lee like a family name."

As the time of the start was near, the *Rosa Lee* was jogging near the easterly end of the line, about a boat's length away from the judges. The breeze had freshened to a good smart blow with whitecaps out in the harbor, when Bang! went the gun — "Haul in the sheet," from Gus, and the *Rosa Lee*, jam on the wind, with starboard tacks aboard, darted over the line with the four boys perched on her weather rail. She gathered headway so quickly that she went into the lead at once. But the boats astern were not far away, and the fleet soon straightened away with the *Dolly Varden* in second place.

"Gee, doesn't she pound?" Bat exclaimed.

"Yes, but she's in it," Lumpy declared.

"And she can heave spray!" said Bing.

"Are we holding our own?" asked Gus, who would look only at his own craft.

"Yes," came from the entire crew.

"Do we point as high as they do?"

"No, but we're footing so fast, we're in a class by ourselves; 'n' the others are all bunched, except the *Ladybug* — she's way astern."

Presently it was "Ready about"; then "Ha-rd a-lee," and they spun around on to the port tack so quickly that it was difficult for the crew to change sides before the lee rail was awash. The *Rosa Lee* took no time to

gather way and she worked so rapidly that very little was lost in tacking ship, so, when they were on the last hitch, the crew found themselves some five lengths in the lead.

As they neared the buoy, the skipper cried:

"Bat, stand by to give her sheet. Bing, take our time. Lumpy, stand by to haul up the fin."

"Now," sang out the skipper, as they swept past the buoy, letting the sail out as they went, while Bing, watch in hand, took the time.

"Bail that water out, Bat. I'll hold the sheet," the skipper ordered.

"Time," yelled Lumpy. "The *Dolly's* just rounded. They did it clumsily. That kid let her give the buoy a deuce of a whang with her starb'd bow. It'll be a repair job, as sure as we're leading the race."

"How much to the good had we?" Gus asked.

"Forty-five seconds," Bing replied.

"Anyway, we can protest the kid for fouling the buoy, if he beats us," Lumpy declared.

"I won't take any prize unless I win it by faster sailing!" declared the skipper.

"That's the stuff," shouted the crew.

"We're dropping him like sixty," Bat announced, "and that man in uniform seems to be giving the kid thunder for crooked steering. He's been writing his name with her."

"Where are the other boats and what are they doing?"

"Oh, they've all got round now, and the *Hoiden* is coming along like a house afire. The *Pixie* and *Tike* are having a private scrap with the *Nifty* pretty close up to them."

"But where is the *Ladybug?* Is she in it?"

"No she's off the map! They had to lower the peak a while ago. She was running her bow under. I thought she'd pitch pole!"

As they crossed the line for the first time, the *Hoiden* had passed the poorly steered *Dolly* and Bing announced that the *Rosa* "was just three minutes and fifteen seconds ahead."

The *Rosa Lee* gained on every hitch and at the finish she drove across far in the lead. Then bedlam was let loose. Bing and his gang with their fish horns could be heard for a mile.

Chapter XVI

THE ABANDONED SLOOP

"DON'T you think Gloucester's changed, mother?" Captain McKenzie asked one morning at breakfast.

"Why yes, I think it has changed some, Archie."

"Of course," the captain continued, "we've always had a mixed population, but since the Italians filled the Fort district, I fancy I've seen quite a few new faces along Main Street. I mean in the business community."

"Yes," said Gus, "there's Mueller who keeps the music store."

"He's a crook, too," declared Bat, who had just come in on his way to town. "Neither Gus nor I would buy a record from him, if we had to walk to Salem to get one."

"You seem to be a little hard on him," said the Captain, with a laugh. "But what's the objection to him? Pay out. Let's have it."

"Well, you see, sir," Bat explained, "we know a boy named Haskins Davis who worked in the store. He's honest and he left because of some of the raw deals that were put over."

"Tell about the diamond stud," Gus suggested.

"Heave away," said the Captain.

"Well, it was like this: A skipper whom we all know got on a bit of a lark and wanted some ready money. Mueller lent him ten dollars on a diamond that cost

him a couple of hundred. When the lark was over, the man called to redeem his stud and Mueller told him he didn't have it — that some one had stolen it. The cap'n told him to make good. Mueller refused and the skipper got mad 'n' said he'd complain at the cop station.

"Mueller said, 'Mine vort ist even so goot like your vort. I'll say dot I didn't never see no tiamant. Mine friendt, I haf you vere der vool ist short. You haf no proof — no writings — pesides, you vouldn't like der bublicity!'"

"The villain!" exclaimed the Captain. "But if the Davis boy is so honest, why didn't he tell the police?"

"Because, sir, he didn't see it. Quite by accident he overheard his boss boasting of it to the Rosenblums, the men who run the shoe store. But he told Mr. Tarr, who keeps a store near by, and asked if he'd advise making a complaint.

"'Boy, you must have been dreaming,' Mr. Tarr said. 'Mueller and his friends are just the sort of up-to-date progressive business men that Gloucester needs. They give liberally toward every new project that makes for civic uplift. They subscribe to every charity.'"

"Mr. Tarr is dead easy. That's all I have to say," Gus declared.

"Yes, and if there are many more like this music man," Mrs. McKenzie added, "I should say that the new element hasn't improved our city any."

"We'd have shanghaied him in my younger days," declared the Captain.

"Come on, Gus," interrupted Bat, "we've got to get over to town."

"Hadn't you better take an umbrella, Gus?" asked Mrs. McKenzie. "It's so hot we may get a shower."

"Take an umbrella, mother? Did you ever see a sailor with an umbrella?"

As Gus and Bat were walking up town from the Ferry, they were greeted by a slight, bright-looking, freckle-faced young woman:

"Morning, boys, morning. Anything new on the other side?"

"Not so far's I know, Miss Rafferty," Gus answered, respectfully.

"Nothing doing," Bat corroborated.

"But we've had something here," volunteered Miss Rafferty, "a real, live modern burglary and I've just telegraphed my story to the Boston papers. It'll be a peach — a regular stunner!"

"Heave away, Dora," Bat urged. "Let's have it!"

"Why, Jones and Company had an unusually large sum of money in their safe last night and this morning they found that 'Riches certainly make themselves wings.' The job was done by experts, if I'm any judge, and I think I know my number!"

"Have the police any clews?" Gus asked.

"If they have, they won't let on. But so long, boys, I'm on my way," answered the lady reporter.

"Dora's all right!" Bat remarked as they continued up the street. "Gee, but she's a hustler!"

"Yes, she's all right!" Gus admitted. "She's mighty kind to lots of people. She ought to have been a man, but she gets there even if she isn't!"

That night Gus lay in his little room at Snug Harbor and dreamed that a man was going to tell him who his parents were. The vagary shifted and he was being pelted with pebbles. He turned over into a more comfortable position, but the dream persisted. Presently,

he got out of bed and his hand touched a collection of beach gravel. Going to the window he called, softly:

"Is that you, Bat?"

"Yes," came the subdued reply. "Gee, I thought you'd never wake up. Get dressed and come down. I didn't want to wake your mother so I hove pebbles as I generally do when there's something up."

"Well, what's the racket?" Gus asked, as he let Bat in the kitchen door.

"I think it's a snap, so I came over to put you wise."

"Well, let's have it, while I make some coffee. We'll mug up."

"We were all asleep about an hour ago, when there was a loud pounding on the door, and Dad, who happened to be home, went down and found a whole crew of men about half drunk who said they wanted a drink of water, but would prefer something stronger, if they could get it. 'You've come to the wrong house for that, boys,' Dad answered, 'but you may have water or I'll make you tea or coffee!'

"They all knew Dad, so they sat down, while he made a pot of coffee and one of them, the skipper, told their story.

"You know the handsome sloop *Ethelinda* that was built at Vincent's Cove — the one that licked all the Provincetown netters? You've said dozens of times you'd like to have her. Well, here's where *you* come in, for you may own her!"

"But what's the *Ethelinda* got to do with the men who mugged up?"

"Now 'vast heaving a minute, Gus, and I'll tell you. These fellows had been shacking over in South Channel, and got a good fare, so as there was a leading breeze,

they went to Boston instead of selling here to the splitters. They stocked up with liquor — inside and out — before starting to come down, and were pretty busy on the passage — the skipper said — trying to carry the load inside.

"The night was fine and clear and they bowled along before a strong sou'west breeze, but for quite a while before they got here, they were all aft, rowing over money matters.

"No one kept a lookout and just as it was turning into a free-for-all, or rough house, smash went the sloop right on Black Bess. The mast snapped off a few feet from the deck and the shock knocked all hands over like pins in a bowling alley.

"She slid off and filled before they could get into the dories and the bath partly sobered most of them. The skipper and the men, too, say she'll probably be in the hands of the underwriters, so let's go down and examine her. It may be there's only one hole in her and a case of having a new mast; then, too, p'rhaps you can get her at your own figures."

"Well, Bat," Gus said thoughtfully, "I think there may be something in it."

"Same here, Gus. So let's take Mr. Frame's motorboat and go down — he told you to use her whenever you want to."

"All right. Only I'm going to cook some bacon and eggs. It's over three hours to low water, and there's no need of going on an empty stomach."

Breakfast was soon on the table and while they ate, Bat suggested:

"If the damage can be repaired easily, I'd lose no time in seeing Filburt Lockerbie. He writes and adjusts all the marine insurance here."

"That's what I'll do. I know Filburt — everyone does — he's a fine fellow."

Mose was in the boiler-room at Frame and Patten's, so Gus explained that they only wanted the launch for a little while, and they went down to the scene of the disaster. The sloop lay on her port side, a sorry sight, with her sails, spars and rigging a tangled mass of rock-weed, kelp and eel-grass, which kept thumping against her forefoot.

They ran the motor boat up to the stern and clambered aboard for an examination.

"Nothing here; only a chainplate bent," Gus declared, as he surveyed the deck of the little vessel. "But come on, Bat. Let's take off our clothes and go below and give her a good overhauling."

"Nothing damaged aft," said Gus, as they stood up to their thighs in water. "Now we'll go for'ard."

"Here we are!" Bat shouted, as they entered the galley. "Just as I thought. It's one hole — she's lying on it."

Gus waded through the opening in the bulkhead, and sure enough on the port side under the stove was a ragged gash with a fringe of broken timbers, smashed-in planks and ceiling.

"What do you think of her?" asked Bat.

"She's better 'n' she looks."

"Well, are you going to make an offer?"

"Yes, I'll see Filburt as soon as I can. I'll offer fifty dollars for her."

"Aren't you generous, though? Dunphy'd give that much for her for junk! But speaking of him, how big's this wagon?"

"What's Dunphy got to do with the size of this sloop?" Gus demanded.

"Well you tell me the size and I'll tell you about Dunphy."

"Come on deck, then, and hold the end of this tape and we'll get her length and beam."

"There," Gus said, "her length's forty-eight feet and her width sixteen. Now what about Dunphy?"

"Only this. He's got a mast that was in a sister craft. You can buy it for a song."

"Come on, Bat. We'll go up to town and if Filbert'll sell me the wreck, I'll sing to Dunphy."

The boys told Mr. Frame about the sloop and he strongly advised them to see Lockerbie at once, but he added:

"Remember, if you buy her, you'll have to work lively and float her off. She'll pound herself to pieces if we have a storm."

After a long hunt about the wharves, the boys at last located Mr. Lockerbie. He told them that the accident had been reported to him and that if they cared to make an offer, he would submit it, but he would not have a chance to go down and view the wreck until that afternoon.

The boys arrived at the landing that afternoon, promptly, in Mr. Frame's motor-boat, for he had lent it to them for several days. As they lay in the dock, Bat looked up suddenly and exclaimed:

"How-dy, Dora! Caught the burglars yet?"

The young lady came down the run and on to the float-stage stamping her foot in mock rage and said to Bat, with a scowl:

"I unraveled the Tyson murder case when the police had to give it up, and I'll bet I could find these burglars if I started to."

"I should think this amateur detective business would be interesting," remarked Gus.

"Amateur, indeed! I qualified as a professional long ago, although I'm only twenty-five now. But, say — I'll bet you a pair of gloves against a box of chocolates that if there are any more breaks made that are evidently the work of the same person or persons, I'll get 'em."

"But Gus doesn't bet, Dora," Bat protested.

"It wouldn't hurt him to bet a box of chocolates," she declared, disdainfully.

"No," Gus broke in, seeing that her fur had been rubbed the wrong way, "no, I don't think there'd be any harm in a wager of that kind, so I'll break my rule, and I'm going to have a two-dollar pair of gloves even if they're paid for by my friend Miss Rafferty."

"'Answer a fool according to his folly,'" quoted Dora.

"But what was that good one you sprang on us the other day, Dora?" Bat broke in before Gus could reply to Miss Rafferty's withering thrust.

"Oh, go along the both of you," answered the lady reporter, "and don't sit there like 'village statesmen with looks profound.'"

"I knew we'd get your goat, Dora," said Bat. "But here comes Filburt."

"Goat, indeed!" exclaimed Dora, and her sunshade was about to descend on Bat's head when Mr. Lockerbie arrested the downward movement of her arm.

"What's the trouble, Dora?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing much, Filburt. Only an exchange of repartee and badinage."

"Bad as what?" queried Bat.

"It's lucky for you there was a mediator," sang out Miss Rafferty, as Gus gave the flywheel a turn and they were off.

"Dora's a great girl," Mr. Lockerbie declared, as they spun along down the harbor. "Good hearted and brainy; she imagines she's bohemian. Her bark's worse than her bite!"

"She c'n bite pretty well, though," Bat added.

"Yes," agreed the agent. "She's pungent, sure enough!"

They soon reached the wreck, and the boys noted a great increase in the amount of seaweed and driftwood among the fouled-up mess of gear that tugged and thumped at her bow.

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Lockerbie. "She's a pretty sight — I don't think. But where's the hole in her? Well, I'm not going in swimming. I've no doubt it's bad enough. What's that offer I wrote down?"

"Fifty dollars, sir," Gus answered.

"Well, boys, you'll get her. But I have to send in a bid and my opinion as to whether they'd better accept it or not. I'll call 'em up on the long distance phone and you can probably know all about it at half past ten to-morrow morning.

"The vessel's worth many times your offer, but, unfortunately for the company, they have so many damaged craft on their hands just now, they don't want any more."

Chapter XVII

THE YOUNG WRECKERS

PROMPTLY at ten the next morning Gus and Bat entered the insurance office.

"Good morning, boys," shouted Mr. Lockerbie, cheerily. "The sloop's yours as soon as you pay over the money. And I wish you luck while you're floating her."

"Thank you," answered Gus. "Here's the money — fifty dollars in currency."

"Correct. Here's the bill of sale."

Their next stop was at Dunphy's who said he would sell the mast — a tough stick of black spruce — for fifteen dollars.

"Will you give us the refusal of the spar for five days?" asked Gus.

"Surely," was the reply.

"Come on, then, Bat, we'll be off," and Gus led the way down to the landing.

'Gee!" Bat exclaimed, as they stood on the upper deck of the *Little Giant.* "This'll be twice as much fun as 'twould be if you bought a bran' new craft, all ready to step aboard of and get under way."

"I think so, too. But here we are at Rocky Neck. I'll get off here and collect the wrecking gear, while you finish the ferry trip over to East Gloucester and round up the gang."

The boys gathered at Frame and Patten's, and, as they were about to start, Mr. Frame came down and asked:

"Sure you have everything you need?"

"Yes, sir," the boss wrecker answered, "we've got a stout jury mast, an immense anchor, plenty of rope, and — the most important thing — heavy canvas, laths, nails, oakum, and coal tar."

"Right as usual. You'll do. Now when she floats, tow her right up here and we'll haul her out on the ways. I know you fellows could repair her — tide work — but I've a better scheme. I haven't had a vacation for ten years, so if you fellows'll take Mr. Higgins and 'yours truly' on a little cruise, I'll put a gang on the hooker and have her ready for sea in less than a week. What do you say, boys?"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Tiger!" came the response, and Bat added:

"Mr. Frame, you're a brick!"

Once at the wreck, Gus had the large anchor placed a cable's length to starboard and ordered the crew to clear away. When five o,clock came, the sails were spread out on Black Bess Point, the running rigging was flaked down, the standing rigging coiled, the boom, gaff and jury mast hauled up high and dry, and all the loose fittings taken from the vessel to a safe place on shore. They had all worked like beavers.

"Now then, who's hungry?" asked Gus at last.

"I am." "I am." "I am." "Starved!" "All in!" came the replies.

"Well, all hands pipe home for supper. Every fellow turn out in time to get breakfast and be aboard the launch at five."

"Ay, ay, sir," they shouted as they rowed off to the launch in one of the sloop's dories.

Next morning, the clock was just striking five as they shoved off on their way for the wreck.

"Now," declared the boss, "we've a hard day's work ahead of us and in the language of Uncle El Higgins, 'It'll be business — strictly business.'"

"What's the first move?" Lumpy inquired.

"To run her cable over to that heavy anchor," answered Gus.

The rope was carried over and made fast with a fisherman's bend. Then a pair of portable shears were unloaded, placed in position on the beach, and guyed in position. The wedges were backed out from the under side of the deck, a strap clapped around the stump of the broken mast and a tackle reeved off from the shears with its lower black hooked into the strap.

"Now, bullies," said the young wreck-master, "get a few turns with that fall around the windlass and while I pry up with a crowbar under the heel, why — break her out."

Gus went below, got a nip with the bar, and sang out, "Heave away."

"Clang, clang, clang, clang," sang the pawls and then, feeling the strain, up shot the water-soaked stump, while the crew worked the breaks lustily.

With the stump out of the way, the boys next rolled the jury mast down the beach close to the shears, where the boss ordered:

"Here you, Scoop, take that piece of new three-inch rope and make a bowline around the spar at the middle. That's it. Now lead it down and clove-hitch it around the spar, just under the saddle. Correct! Dogger,

hook the block into the bowline and you, Flip, take the fall to the windlass, while I reeve off a gantline."

When everything was in readiness, the mast was hoisted into the air, and, when it was high enough, the boss guided it through the hole in the deck as one hand slacked away at the windlass.

The shears were now removed, using the gantline to slack away with, and the boss sent Bing, who was a good hand at rigging work, up to clove-hitch the bight of a pair of temporary shrouds over the masthead. A heavy strap was sent up and Bing passed it around the masthead. Then he hooked the block to the strap and all hands waded knee-deep while they overhauled the tackle towards the anchor. The tackle was stretched taut, the block hooked into a strong strap on the cable, and the boss shouted:

"Spell-O!"

Bat made for the launch and produced coffee, sugar, and evaporated milk, singing out:

"Go down in the galley, some of you, and get the coffee pot and mugs. We'll build a fire under the banking and mug up."

"Why not dig some clams?" proposed Lumpy. "There's a digger in the hold."

"Clear thing!" decided Gus. "A clam-bake by all means."

Armed with one digger, a chain-hook and old fish-knives, they quickly had a mess of clams; then they laid a floor of beach stone, started a hot fire on top of it, and, after the mug up, sat around until the fire burned to coals. The fire was swept out into a smaller place, where a second pot of coffee could be simmering, and then the hot stones were covered with clams. The

clams were next covered with rock weed and a heavy canvas was spread over the steaming pile.

At last Bat lifted the tarpaulin and announced;

"They're done, fellows. Let's hoe in."

"I guess I'll loosen my . . ." Lumpy was saying, when Bat interrupted:

"Look! There goes Tim Rafferty and his gang. They're looking over here."

"They sure are," Bing corroborated.

"The poor old bank dory's looking seedier than ever," remarked Gus. "I don't believe she'll last much longer."

"Gee, but Tim's down on all of us!" Lumpy exclaimed.

"You'd hardly think he was Miss Rafferty's cousin," Scoop commented.

"No, and I don't see why Dora can't straighten him out," said Bat. "She's reformed a lot of outsiders."

"Oh, I don't believe there's any real harm in Tim," declared Gus, who had good reason to have enmity for the leader of the "Union Hillers." "He's got his back up at the whole of us because we crossed his bow in the *Waterwitch*."

"And he's kept his back up ever since," added Bat. "He says he'll get our goat."

"Anyway," Gus asserted, "I don't bear him any ill will."

Tim's dory soon passed out of sight and the boys forgot all about him.

The sails were dry by this time and they were made up into parcels. At high water the wreckers waded forward with trousers rolled up, swayed the tackle taut, and got a few turns on the windlass.

At a nod from the skipper, the pawls went, "Clang, clang, clang, clang," and when a good strain was heaved,

the wreck, partly water borne now, responded, and slowly, very slowly, assumed an upright position.

"Clang, clang, clang, clang," the pawls went on, until the vessel listed sharply to starboard, when the commander ordered:

"Heave pawl! Belay!"

At low water the crew waded out to where the sloop lay with the damaged side tipped up so they could get at it.

"Gee whiz, what a gash!" Bat ejaculated.

"Some hole to patch!" Scoop declared.

"Yes, and we must turn to and begin it," ordered the boss. "Flip, pass some of those boards out of the hold. The rest of you get everything we'll need."

With a boy to help, Gus got the length and then Bing sawed the boards. As fast as a board was ready the boss nailed it on. But "time and tide wait for no man," and when the last board was fastened, the water was too high to do anything more. So the wreckers reluctantly boarded the launch and started for home.

At low water the next morning the boys were on hand and the great square of thick canvas was stretched taut over the boarded-up hole, tacked into place, daubed all over with coal tar, and well battened with laths.

"'Thar,' as the old ship carpenters say," Gus remarked, "'I guess she'll dew!'"

When the tide came in, the young wreckers had the satisfaction of seeing the sloop straighten up. They cast off the tackle and, two hours before high water, after taking her gaff, boom and topmast aboard, they passed a line and the motor boat started slowly along up the lower harbor.

When off the club-house, Gus sang out:

"Who says dinner?"

"I do," was the unanimous response, so they chug-chugged in to anchor near the landing.

As they reached the club-house early in the afternoon to resume their towing trip to the other side of Rocky Neck, Gus shouted:

"But where's the *Ethelinda?* Have you seen her?" he asked of a club member — the only person in sight on the piazza.

"Why, yes, I think I did notice a sloop off there. And it seems to me there was some one on her — a boy, possibly. And, yes, there may have been a rather shabby dory astern. But, really, I couldn't swear to it, you know."

"Tim's doings, or I'll go to blazes!" was Bat's emphatic comment.

"The wind's nor'west," explained Gus. "If she's been cast adrift, we'll find her in by Packard's Landing. If she's sunk, her jury mast ought to show. But bear a hand and we'll take the launch and look around."

They had only gone a short way, when Bat shouted:

"There's the sloop just opening up by that point. She's filling again." Then, as they swung in a better position to see, he fraily yelled:

"Skates and dogfish! There's a dory alongside and some one's on board. It looks like Tim."

"It sure does," agreed the others.

"He sees us, whoever he is," Gus broke in. "Look! He's jumping into his dory."

"We can catch him with this launch before he gets far," asserted Bing.

"Not if he's foxy," Gus rejoined. "He can row straight into shallow water, but, you man at the wheel,

steer for the sloop and put three or four of us aboard so we can begin pumping or she'll sink."

The motor boat ran alongside the sinking sloop, and Gus, followed by Scoop and Dogger, jumped on the deck, which was now nearly even with the water.

"Start that pump a-going!" yelled Gus, as he made a dive below to examine matters. He went under clothes and all, and, coming up all dripping, said:

"I thought so. Some of the boards have been rammed loose. Here's what it was done with."

He held out an oar that obviously did not belong aboard the *Ethelinda*, then wig-wagged the launch to come back and ordered the pumping stopped:

"For," he said, "she's in shoal water."

The sloop's anchor was dropped as far away to starboard as it would go, a tackle was clapped on from the cable to the masthead, and a strain heaved from the windlass. The boat sank almost at once, but as the launch was alongside the boys merely stepped into her and cast off the painter.

"Here's a pretty mess," growled Bat, "after all our hard work."

"Well," said Gus, "lucky she's in shoal water. We'll patch her up again and set a watch day and night till she's on the railway."

At low water the patching was rebuilt, the masthead tackle unhooked and rounded up and the cable end passed through the hawse-pipe to the windlass.

The boys sprawled about the deck waiting for the tide to float the vessel, when Gus suggested, with a yawn:

"Let's draw numbers to see when we stand watch."

"We won't let the skipper stand watch at all," gaped Bat. "Will we, fellows?"

"No," came the chorus.

"But we aren't at sea!" Gus remonstrated.

"No, but you've done most of the work," Lumpy answered.

Flip drew the first watch, while the rest of the crew turned in on the cushions in the launch. At ten o'clock Flip called Bing, who held the watch for three-quarters of an hour, pumping occasionally, and then called,

"All hands."

The boys turned to with many a yawn, heaved on the windlass — the sloop was afloat now — and soon got the anchor. The launch started and the interrupted passage was continued. Twelve o'clock was just striking when they docked at Frame and Patten's and a quarter of an hour later only the watch paced the deck.

When Mose arrived he insisted that the boys go home and get some sleep. "Fur," he said, "nobody won't dare do nothin', as I'll be watchin' of her till the boss comes. Besides, the tide won't sarve high enough till 'leven to haul that air Joe-sloop on the railway."

But the boys started back to the railway at an early hour, and soon the eagle-eyed Bat shouted:

"Skates and dogfish! She's high and dry and there's a whole army at work on her!"

"Right you are, Bat!" they shouted and were off on the run.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Frame, as the cheering boys put in an appearance — Lumpy puffing in the rear, "it'll be strictly business. Hustle and take everything out of the sloop and clean her up for painting."

The boys worked with a will while the carpenters

ripped out and started repairing. Finally, Mr. Frame had the caulkers go over every seam, for he declared:

"She got a rough shaking when she hit Black Bess and it'll strengthen the hull wonderfully to give her a thorough caulking."

In a week the *Ethelinda* was ready for sea.

Chapter XVIII

A SOUTH SHORE CRUISE

"SHE'S a beauty!" Gus exclaimed as he stood with Mr. Frame and part of the crew on the landing.

"Gee, but that gold stripe and scroll set her off!" Flip added, admiringly.

"And black paint outside with snow-white inside the bulwarks is becoming to her," was Dogger's comment.

"But where's Uncle El Higgins?" asked Bing.

"Here he comes now!" announced the skipper.

By the time the ancient joiner reached the float-stage, Flip and Dogger were there with the *Waterwitch* and the party went aboard where Bat, assisted by Lumpy, received them in true navy style.

A tarpaulin was laid over the rail and the *Waterwitch* hauled on deck. Then the skipper approached Bat and said, gravely:

"Mr. Wonson, loosen sail."

"Ay, ay, sir! All hands turn to 'n' get the stops off o' the mains'l. That's it. Slack the main sheet, one hand; the rest o' you tail on to the halliards. Now then sing out some one — up she rises!"

Bing started it and the rest joined in with a medley of "Heigh-yi-ho! Heave-ho! Whey-hi-hey! O-hey-ho! Ki-yi."

"That's well the peak!" interrupted the mate. "Now jig up that throat halliard. Now the peak again. Up with it. Wrinkle it."

Even Uncle El Higgins sitting in a camp chair aft talking with Mr. Frame could hear the hideous heigh-hoing.

"Lay out and loosen the jib, one hand," ordered the mate. Then the summons came,

"Mr. Wonson!"

"Sir!"

"Send one hand in the chain locker and heave short."

"Scoop, you're an idler — cook —; stand by there below at the chain locker."

"Let's have some style this time," Bing suggested. "That heigh-hoing's the limit!"

"All right! Go as far as you like," added Dogger. Bing struck up, and the rest followed in chorus;

SOLO: *I served my time in the Black Ball line,*
ALL: *To me, whey-hey-hey-o;*
SOLO: *I served my time in the Black ball line,*
ALL: *A long time ago.*

CHORUS

A long long time and a very long time,
To me, whey-hey-hey-ho;
A long long time, and a very long time,
A long time ago.

SOLO: *I wish to thunder I'd never been born,*
ALL: *To me, whey-hey-hey-o;*
SOLO: *To go a paddling round Cape Horn,*
ALL: *A long time ago.*

SOLO: *Around Cape Horn where stormy winds blow,*
ALL: *To me, whey-hey-hey-o;*
SOLO: *Around Cape Horn through sleet and snow,*
ALL: *A long time ago.*

"Up and down, sir," interrupted the mate, as he made an up and down gesture with his hand.

Uncle El Higgins and Mr. Frame were doubled up with laughter, the boys were so salt.

"All right!" volleyed the skipper. "Break her out."

When the anchor was part way up, the command came,

"Mr. Wonson, give her jib 'n' jumbo!"

"Very good, sir! H'ist away on that jib halliard. Doctor, slip up here and take the gasket off the jumbo."

It was a glorious morning with a light westerly air, and the *Ethelinda* with her smooth, newly-painted bottom, slipped along like a sylph. The gaff and jib-topsails were set and all hands gathered aft.

"The red tape was only for show, fellows," the skipper explained. "But apart from all fooling, it's the right way to perform any evolutions or stunts."

"No doubt of it!" Mr. Frame agreed.

"And it looks so cute!" added the mate.

"The clear thing!" declared the second officer.

"Doctor," ordered the skipper. "Slip down and make a pot of coffee. Uncle El looks happy, but he hasn't said a word."

Under the cheering influence of Scoop's brew, Uncle El settled himself and broke his long silence.

"No," he said profoundly, "I do *not* belong to the Essex branch of the Higgins family — I do not. I came from the Cape Cod branch. My mother was a Nickerson—she was!"

This was but the beginning of a long account of the Civil War which lasted until they ran into Marblehead. They picked up a mooring, gave the sails a harbor furl, and started ashore.

As they reached the narrow crooked streets, Gus declared:

"I'm glad we came in here. I never tire of the quaint old town."

"Why not go to the Ireson house," suggested Bat. Then, as he saw some boys, he asked:

"Where's the 'Old Flud Iresun' place, son?"

No sooner did Bat finish his question than he got a smart blow between the eyes. It came so unexpectedly that it dazed him for a moment, but he was back on the job in a hurry and landed on the Marblehead boy's jaw. It was easy to see that both boys had science and they were in the thick of the fray with Mr. Frame trying to separate them, when the chief of police strolled by, grabbed both boys by their coat collars and demanded an explanation.

"I seen this guy come along," said the Marblehead boy, "and I knowed he was going to poke 'Flud Oireson,' so I planked him."

"I only asked where the place was, sir," Bat explained.

"If he'd only asked 'where's the *Cap'n* Oireson place' I'd uv told him!"

"Well," said the Chief, "it's this way. Strangers come here and ask to see the famous house in what seems to us a disrespectful manner. The poem was all a yarn written from hearsay, but our people are very loyal and proud and resent any mention of it.

"Why," he continued, "did you know we've been first to the call of duty whenever our country has needed us? The men who ferried Washington across the Delaware were from Marblehead!"

The Ethelinda's first port of call from Marblehead was Hull and here the whole crew went ashore for the mail. Then they picked out a shady spot, and, while Mr. Frame was filling his pipe, Uncle El opened his paper.

"Look at this, will you?" exclaimed the veteran. "It's in the *Breeze* — it is. 'Daring Burglary. Thieves Crack Moulton, Brown and Company's Safe. Loot Five Thousand Dollars.'"

"Gee whittaker!" ejaculated Bat.

"It seems only the other day that Jones and Company were robbed!" Lumpy declared.

"Perhaps it's the same gang," suggested Dogger.

"As a rule," Mr. Frame asserted, "burglars don't work places so hard to get away from as our city. It's on a branch railroad for one thing; then, too, if they travel by automobile there's only one highway off the Cape."

"But they could get away with a motor boat," Gus broke in.

"Very true," the builder agreed.

"Well, burglars or no burglars, I'm going to get one fellow to go aboard with me and help get dinner," announced Scoop.

"I'll go," volunteered Bing.

The cook and his assistant rowed off aboard, while the rest discussed the news from home. Presently, an elderly man approached, stout and florid, with an unmistakable stamp of the sea about him.

"Pretty little vessel you have out there," he remarked. "Cruising?"

"Yes, sir, we are," said Bat.

"Where're you bound?"

"This young man, Gus Harvey, is cap'n," Mr. Frame replied. "He can tell you better than any one else."

"We want to go up some of the rivers," laughed Gus, "but we don't know the way."

"Well, my name's Caverly. I'm pilot for all the South

Shore rivers, but I've about given up — I shan't do a great sight more. If you'd like to sail me over to Quincy where I've a little business to transact, I'll take you up all the rivers and welcome."

"Cap'n Caverly," Bat exclaimed, "you're a brick!"

As they stood across the bay with wind abeam, the pilot remarked:

"You observe regular sea-going rules in giving out orders. Well, it's right. I was in the navy myself, when I was young. I was with Farragut at Mobile Bay. But, say, this packet can sail mighty well! Why don't you put her in the City of Boston regatta next Saturday?"

"Go on, Gus," said Bat and Lumpy together.

"Yes," urged Bing.

"Do," implored Flip. "I'm sure she can sail."

"Oh, it'd be great," Dogger added, while Scoop, sensing it from forward, yelled,

"If it's a race you're talking about, let's enter."

"She'd go in with the topsail sloops, and, if I'm any judge, her chances 'd be good," declared the pilot.

"Well, I'll take a chance then," answered Gus.

"All right," said the pilot. "I'll see that she's entered. And we might as well sail from here to City Point, South Boston, to be on hand for the race. But what do you think of that town in there — Hingham?"

"Well," Gus answered, "it strikes me as about as sleepy a town as I've ever seen." Then turning to Uncle El Higgins, he asked:

"But what would you say, Uncle El?"

"We — ll," drawled the old man, "dignified repose describes it — it does!"

Chapter XIX

THE *ETHELINDA* SAILS A RACE

RACE day came and the *Ethelinda*, with the head and foot of the mainsail hauled taut, was ready. Captain Caverly had attended to entering the boat and as he came aboard produced a ball of common white string.

"The poorest quality I could find," he said. "It's to be an old-fashioned anchor start, so we'll need rotten stops for the heads'ls."

"What kind of a breeze are we going to get?" asked the second officer.

"Well, it's sou'west now, and if it acts as it usually does at this time of year, it'll be blowing great guns before the day's over. But it's time to get under way now and pick out a good berth for a start."

According to the rules only eight were allowed for a crew, so Uncle El Higgins and Mr. Frame were rowed over to the judges' steamer where they could see the race. As they sat on the hurricane deck, the sight that met their eyes was more than picturesque. Dorchester Bay seemed alive with snow-white sails for the racers were maneuvering now for good positions and all types and rigs were there from sailing dories up to fair-sized schooners.

The *Ethelinda* was well berthed at the windward end of the line and lay with a spring on her cable. The head sails were rotten-stopped and swayed as taut as a drum-

head. Her commander inspected the work and then gave the crew their stations.

"No navy frills now, so, Bat, you 'n' Bing stand by to haul in that spring from the starb'd quarter. Lumpy, you 'n' Scoop 'n' Dogger stand by the heads'l sheets to haul 'em to windward, and you, Flip, stand by to heave the buoy over."

The larger classes started one by one at five minute intervals, and at length Gus exclaimed:

"Every fellow ready now! Only thirty seconds! Fifteen! Ten! Five! We're off!"

The whistle gave a long blast and Flip hove the cable off the pawl post, while the two boys hauled the spring on the weather quarter.

"Haul away the heads'l sheets," fairly roared the skipper. "Ease off the mains'll — some more. That's enough. Hold her at that! Captain Caverly, take the mainsheet, please."

"We're in the weather berth," Bat boasted.

"Yes, but these lightly built yachts are crawling out and away from us," said Lumpy.

"Gee, I'd like to see it blow!" exclaimed the skipper.

"Oh, well," Captain Caverly answered, "we're not doing badly. Anything can sail down hill, especially if it has a club topsail and spinnaker."

"There must be a dozen in this class."

"Just exactly, I counted them."

"I do believe the wind's increasing!" Dogger exclaimed. "You can tell by the sound of the ripples."

"But they're beating us badly," said Gus, gloomily. "This is a procession all right, and we're the rearguard."

"Don't worry," said the pilot. "We're halfway down the West Way now and the race program continues,

'Proceeding to and around Boston Light Vessel by way of Main Ship Channel, thence to and around the Graves, leaving everything to port, back to the starting line.'

"It doesn't say which side of Rainsford Island you must go, but the yachtsmen always go to the s'uth'ard of the island."

"Long Island — West Head's abeam, fellows," Bat announced.

"Yes," answered the pilot, "and in a few minutes when I sing out, ease off your sheets and steer a course east by south half south for Hospital Rocks. I'll take the wheel for a few moments when we go through the passage."

"Gee, see her list!" Bat shouted. "It's come — the breeze — hurrah for the breeze!"

The wind was increasing rapidly and as the pilot sang out, "Square away," the *Ethelinda* took a bone in her teeth and began to romp through the water.

"The slowest of these yachts are a good mile ahead of us," Gus estimated, "and the leaders have squared away, down there by Sunken Ledge and are setting spinnakers."

"Well, here we are! Let me take her now," suggested the pilot. "When I sing out, flatten in a little, but stand by to ease off again."

Captain Caverly kept on the same course straight for Quarantine — Hospital Rocks, he called them — and the crew noticed that the ledges of ugly rock extended just about one mile south-southwest to Sunken Ledge. But the boys were kept too busy to think much about rocks.

When it looked as if the sloop was about to poke her bowsprit into an old house, perched high on stilts on the northernmost of the ledges, the skilful veteran suddenly

up helm, let her off a few points, then, keeping her on this course for half a minute, bellowed:

"Trim in."

Another minute and the *Ethelinda* was through the passage, and the pilot gave up the wheel as he ordered:

"Ease off again."

"Gracious, but that was quickly done," Gus exclaimed. "It's a narrow ugly hole and I shouldn't care to tackle it."

"If you lived in Hull, you'd think nothing of it. I've taken ninety ton coasters through the 'Rocks,' as we call the passage, when I was your age. But see, young man, what I've saved in distance. We've nearly caught the fleet."

"Gee, yes!" Bat yelled. "Look, fellows, it's breezing up!"

The racing yachts were driving down the channel, their spinnaker booms buckling like bows, but the heavily built *Ethelinda* could barely hold what she had gained by cutting through the passage.

As they passed Boston Light, she did show a spurt and picked up considerably.

"It's bound to blow — never knew it to fail," declared the pilot. "At this time of year when it starts up as it did this morning, it'll be a stiff breeze at noon and, by afternoon, a smoky sou'wester."

The wind kept increasing and the *Ethelinda* began to gain. It was a stern chase and the yachts had to take in their kites about a mile before they reached the light ship. By this time the wind was howling.

On rushed the *Ethelinda;* now at a billow's top, seeming to pause; then taking a mad shoot down a deep hollow, where nothing could be made out ahead,

yet still tearing on — ever on. But the yachts were also moving, for when borne to the top of a giant comber, the spindrift flying in sheets all over them, the crew could see that one craft had rounded the light ship.

"That's the *Pansy*," Captain Caverly declared. "She's all right with a light breeze or a fair wind, but hold on. If it hauls a point or two to the west'ard, she'll drop back to a poor position, or my name's not Fred Caverly!"

"Two more — yes, five now, — and six!" Bat exclaimed, as the *Ethelinda* neared the bunch of yachts ahead of them.

Gus had all he could do to keep a half decent course and he was busy at the wheel, but he got a chance for a glimpse out of the corner of his eye, and declared:

"I don't know what those fellows'll do after they round the Graves! They're nearly staggered now on a beam wind. Gee, see that one dip her boom under!"

"You're right, Mr. Commander," agreed the pilot. "It'll be a long tack and a short one beating up Broad Sound, and they'll never carry their canvas."

The wind was now fairly roaring and the *Ethelinda* entered and rushed through the bunch of five yachts that were fast nearing the light ship. Suddenly Gus yelled:

"Clew up that tops'l. Furl it small, one hand, you Dogger."

"Oh, fellows," Bat yelled, as they were lifted high on a giant billow, "there's the judges' boat. Uncle El and Mr. Frame are waving like sixty! They've run down to see the turn."

"Stand by to jibe over!" shouted the skipper, as he ran close under the stern of the light ship to get a lee place for the maneuver.

Bang went the boom, and, luffing up to her new course, the little vessel tore along like a racehorse.

"I'm going to carry that jib-tops'l to the Graves, if the topmast'll stay in her," Gus declared.

"Good grit," commended the pilot.

"We're dropping those fellows astern," Lumpy announced.

"And we're fast overhauling the leaders," Bing added.

"Say, but can't this one carry her muslin?" said Bat, admiringly, as the *Ethelinda* with lee rail awash swept along with the spray flying all over them.

They were now halfway to the Graves, the wind blowing harder and harder, right in the trough of the sea that came over the weather side *kerplunk* — to run off in a torrent to leeward. All hands were drenched but they took no notice for they were overhauling the leaders so rapidly that now it seemed like a race.

"They've hauled on the wind!" the chief officer exclaimed suddenly.

"Yes," answered the pilot, "and now you'll see the *Pansy* drop back, if, in fact, they don't come to anchor. But those other craft are abler. The second one's a pretty good boat to wind'ard. Her name's the *Iolanthe*."

As they drew near the Graves buoy, Gus remarked:

"We can thank that jib-tops'l for pulling us up on this leg. She's steered beau—"

Bang! Crash! The topmast went to leeward, the jib-topsail floundering and pounding as it slatted against the lee rigging.

"Flip," bellowed Gus, "get your hatchet. Don't try to save anything. Chop! Chop like thunder!"

Flip was below and on deck again in no time. Up aloft he went to where the broken spar hung by its

splinters, while Scoop with a cleaver went out on the end of the bowsprit. Chop! chop! chop! went the hatchet and cleaver, Flip hacking away at the fibers, as Scoop severed the wire, while Bing cut the lanyards. Splash went the spar and the sail blew away like a balloon.

"Well, I'm glad that topmast's gone," the skipper declared. "We'll sail all the better when we haul on the wind."

As they reached the buoy, they flattened in to beat up Broad Sound. They knew too much to lace her and she romped along on the port hitch until the pilot sang out:

"Let her go round. We'll just weather Green Island."

This tack was a short one, and the veteran pilot yelled, just before they reached Half Tide Rock:

"Ready about again. We'll lee-bow the ebb tide in South Channel."

The *Ethelinda* was now romping along in much smoother water than the yachts ahead of her. Suddenly Bing exclaimed:

"Look, fellows! There's the *Pansy* over in North Channel with her jib taken in and they're reefing the mains'l."

"Yes," added the pilot, "and there's another one nearly on her beam ends. She'll have to withdraw presently, too."

"There are four of them for us to reckon with now," counted the skipper.

"We're picking up all the time," Captain Caverly declared. "They're only half a mile ahead now!"

"Gee, but those three are dropping behind the *Iolanthe!*" Bat exclaimed.

"Yes, they are," agreed the pilot. "They're the *Ibis, Rambler* and *Clytie.*"

"Gracious, how we're overhauling 'em!" said the skipper.

"Well, I know a thing or two about the tides in this harbor," said the pilot with a smile.

"You sure do!"

Now they were past Ram Head. As they approached the three yachts on the starboard tack, it was doubtful whether the *Ethelinda* could cross their bows, but the skipper kept her going.

The *Ibis* was leading by three lengths so Gus went under her stern to avoid a collision. But he crossed the bows of the others and remained on this tack until Nix's Mate was abeam, when Captain Caverly ordered:

"Ready about. We'll stand almost in to the Nubble."

On dashed the *Ethelinda* straight in towards the shallow passage, while the *Ibis* came tearing along on the port tack after standing in to the Narrows. A collision again seemed imminent but when the sloops neared each other, the skipper of the *Ibis* saw that he could not get by, so he kept off and went astern.

Captain Caverly had them stand in, then, "Ready about," and they bowled along close in to Long Island.

"Hasn't the *Ibis* a strong head tide out there?" Gus asked the pilot.

"Yes, and it's sagging her off to loo'ard."

"Well, we're ahead and to wind'ard of her. What are our chances for overtaking the *Iolanthe?*"

"You can see we're picking up on her all the time. Keep her moving."

"Gee, but the *Rambler* and *Clytie* are nowhere!" Bat chuckled, as he cast a disdainful look astern.

"No, they're not in it," Lumpy corroborated.

"Well, boys," said the pilot at length, "let her go round. We'll stand in to the edge of Spectacle Island flats, and then, as your old friend Major Higgins says, 'We'll show them what kind of trees make shingles!'"

The *Ethelinda* stood almost into the eel-grass, then went about, and as they ranged up the shore of the island, the *Iolanthe* came tearing across to get into shallower water. She tacked right ahead of the Cape Ann craft and now both boats were sailing on an even footing.

It was nip and tuck, but the *Iolanthe*, ahead, got out from under the island first, where she got the full force of the wind which was streaming down Dorchester Bay like a tornado. The *Iolanthe* careened until her cabin was in the water, then partly recovered, but the *Ethelinda* went tearing on and gained a length.

"Gee!" Bat exclaimed, "if it'll only keep on blowing like that, we'll get there!"

"We've picked up another length," Gus declared. "Watch us go!"

The *Ethelinda* was right in her element, and, when an unusually heavy puff came ripping down the bay, she seemed to be pulling the *Iolanthe* back to her.

"The finish's only a mile and a half away now," exclaimed Gus, "and if we keep on like this we'll pass —"

"But look at that confounded tug with three barges strung out astern of her!" Bat interrupted. "Neither of us'll be able to cross her bows!"

"No, it doesn't look like it," the skipper answered.

The large ocean-going tug came steadily on, tooting her whistle for the sloops to keep out of her way.

"Gee whiz," Bat cried, "the *Iolanthe* is going to try it! I think she'll get by."

"Isn't that the limit?" Gus muttered. "With half a chance we'd beat him!"

"Will she do it?" every one asked. It was a moment of suspense; they expected to see the yacht cut in halves.

"Well," grumbled the disconsolate skipper, as their rival disappeared from view behind the tug, "we've got to go on the other hitch until the tow passes."

"Never say die," cautioned the veteran. "There's many a slip — Jerusalem! The wind's veered three points! Let her go round! Round with her! Lively!"

As the veteran had said, the wind had shifted, and the *Iolanthe* barely squeezing by ahead of the tow lost a trifle, while the *Ethelinda* by making a short hitch with starboard tacks aboard had gained. On rushed the sloops from opposite directions. Which one would lead, no one knew. Now they were nearer, and yet nearer with the finish line only a mile away.

Now they met, but Gus, on the port tack, took a chance and crossed his rival's bow.

"Gee, that was a close one!" Bat crowed.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! We've got his goat!"

"Don't be too sure," admonished the pilot. "The *Iolanthe* is the best rough water yacht, to wind'ard, in this part of the country, so look out."

The wind was sweeping in wicked gusts down the bay and kicking up a nasty chop. Both sloops went about and soon were almost together again with the *Ethelinda* on the right of way tack. Just as it seemed that they would cross the *Iolanthe's* bow, down came a wicked blast fully three points to the southward and the yacht slipped by.

Gus stood on long enough to get no back wind from the yacht, went about, and the *Ethelinda* took up a stern chase.

The wind blew harder and harder and the *Iolanthe* heeled until she was hidden in the foam, while the *Ethelinda* crawled slowly up on her. Round went the *Iolanthe*, and a moment later the Cape Ann sloop, with the wind veering this way and that in the flaws.

"Only a quarter of a mile more," Bat shouted. "Gee, if it'll only keep on blowing like this!"

They had it nip and tuck. First one sloop was favored and then the other, both going around whenever the wind shifted to head them off. Now they were almost up to the finish, both on the port tack, with the *Ethelinda* two lengths astern, but well to weather.

"Oh, thunder, see the yacht stagger!" Bat yelled, when the line was only a hundred feet away.

"Gosh, yes!" shouted the pilot, as another gust swooped down on them veering westerly. "The yacht's hove down. She's out of it! Great Scot, Gus, keep her to it, lad, and —"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" yelled the crew, as they dashed over the line. "We've won it!"

Chapter XX

THE CAMPS ON SQUAM RIVER

GUS started for town one morning, and as he was waiting for the *Little Giant*, Mose hailed him:

"Hey, there, Cap'n Gus! Wha' cher goin' by fer without stopping to see a feller? Luff up a minute."

"I'll tell you, Mose. I've got to go to town and then come back, round up the fellows 'n' have them decide what we shall do this week."

"Say, lad, naow I'll tell you somethin'. First goin' off, only fer me you wouldn't hev no Joe-sloop. Leastways she'd be on bottom."

"How's that?"

"Wall, yisterday I seen a feller movin' around on deck and he looked like a good-sized boy, so, as I knowed you fellers were all at Essex, I hollered and started to row out an' when he seen me comin' he jumped into a tough-looking bank dory and pulled out o' the cove, suddin."

"But she's still out at the mooring!"

"Yes, but hold on. I went aboard 'n' found he'd busted the hasp on the slide, 'n' I found an inch 'n' a half ship augar that he forgot to take with him, when I driv him off hollerin'. That fellow meant to sink her!"

"Mose, you're a brick. Here's a couple of dollars for you and to pay some one to watch the sloop. I've chartered her and she'll leave at noon."

"I don't want to take this money, Gus."

"Keep it. But the *Giant* is alongside. So long!"

When Gus got back to Snug Harbor and met his crew, there was a great hub-bub when he told them what Mose had said.

"Rafferty's work as plain as day!" Bat exclaimed. " 'n' I'll get his goat yet — see if I don't."

The others were even more vehement.

"Well, to change the subject," said Gus, presently, "where shall we go this week? What shall we do? Why not go up to father's bungalow and camp out?"

"Hurrah! Bully! Clear thing! Nothing better!" the crew shouted.

"We'll go over in the *Rosa Lee*, then. She's twice the boat for creek sailing that the *Waterwitch* is, and father said I could use his double-barrel gun."

"Then," said Bat, decisively, "all I've got to say is, he's a brick!"

"Turn to now and get your dunnage," Gus ordered.

"I'm half starved," growled Lumpy, as they landed at Captain McKenzie's pier late that afternoon and began to carry their dunnage and stores up to the bungalow. "Nothing to eat but sardines and hard-tack since morning!"

"But you look as though you had a good boarding place," laughed Bat.

"Aw, cut the joking," growled Lumpy again. "We'll gather wood for Scoop. Come on fellers."

"Come, Flip and Dogger," ordered the cook, "you two set the table in the living room. I'm getting ready the quickest and easiest thing I know of — bacon and eggs — that and hot coffee'll keep you all going while I make some buckwheat cakes."

After supper all hands were lolling about in ham-

mocks and darkness had nearly set in when Flip exclaimed, pointing down the river:

"If that isn't Tim's bank dory heading in for the cove on Rust Island, I'll be blowed."

"It sure looks like her," Gus agreed, "and if those fellows've followed us up here for a camping out scrape, there'll be some trouble before we're through!"

"Shall we stand anchor watch aboard the bungalow?" Bat inquired.

"No," Gus decided, "but we'll turn to and carry the *Rosa Lee* up and shove her under the piazza."

There was no trouble that night and all hands slept like tops. The next days were uneventful, too, and the boys were busy with shooting, fishing, clamming, and swimming. Tim Rafferty's gang could be seen once in a while, sailing around in the old dory, or at anchor fishing. They were also in evidence walking along the shore after driftwood and as they were only a quarter of a mile away the report of their shot-gun was often audible.

One night all hands turned in early so as to be up in the morning after yellow legs, peep and plover. They had hardly fallen asleep when there came a roaring and fanlike buzzing that sounded directly overhead.

"Skates and dogfish!" cried Bat. "What in thunder is that?"

"It can't be the Rafferty gang," said Dogger, "for they've no motor boat or anything else to make a noise like that —"

"Help! Help!" came a voice from outside.

"Where away?" called Gus, opening the kitchen door.

"Up here in the tree," the voice answered. "My

biplane's a wreck and I'm all snarled up in the mess. Can you climb up here and help me get clear?"

Bat and Gus were already shinnying up the tree, and, after a time, they managed to disentangle the victim of the accident.

"But I can't get down, now I'm free," declared the aviator, "for my wrist is badly sprained."

"Bing," Gus ordered, "row over to the dredger that started digging the channel near Rust Island to-day and borrow a stout rope. And you, Scoop, take the skiff's anchor rode and heave it up here."

Bing was back in a hurry, the large rope was hauled up by the smaller one and passed over a limb of the tree when the disabled man was lowered to the ground in a bowline.

"Grainger's my name," the stranger began as they reached the cottage. "I started to fly from Plum Island to Marblehead. But the engine was acting a trifle wrong, so I decided to alight on the water in front of the bungalow and trust to the southeast wind to blow me into the pier. But it was getting quite dark and I misjudged the distance and when I shut the power off the machine failed to clear the trees. So here I am!"

As they were dropping off to sleep again, Mr. Grainger asked:

"Did you hear from the mainland to-day? There was another robbery at Gloucester last night. The papers said there were signs that all the recent burglaries were committed by the same gang. The police are to hold up all persons leaving town by the road, railroad track or by motor boat. They will shadow all suspicious strangers even in the daytime."

"Gee, it'll be a feather in Dora's hat, if she catches 'em," Bat murmured.

"Yes, if she does," Gus answered.

The next forenoon the boys rigged tackle and lowered the wrecked biplane to the ground. Then Gus and the aviator went to town for supplies and it was late when they got back. By this time the boys had relaxed their vigilance somewhat as there had been no signs of trouble from the Rafferty gang. So they left the provisions in the boat while they adjourned for supper.

They were about half through the meal, when Bat, who sat facing the water, cried:

"Quick!"

Then he kicked his chair out of the way and rushed down the beach followed by the others. There was Tim Rafferty — now some fifty feet away — rowing the *Rosa Lee* as fast as he knew how towards Rust Island to the accompaniment of wild cheers from his gang. The boys could do nothing, but stand and watch the receding boat.

Tim rowed on and the louder his followers yelled, the faster he pulled at the oars. The dredger had a line stretched taut, made fast to a tree on the island, but the excited oarsman forgot this and rowed full tilt until the boat shot under. The rope took Tim in the back of the neck and he was tossed in a heap among the provisions. The jeers and hoots from his gang were loud and hearty. The leader and bully feared to lose his prestige, so he held a bag of eggs aloft and yelled:

"Not an egg bro —"

Smash! The fast rowing had slopped a little water on the floor and the bottom of the bag was too soft to hold its load. Tim was liberally covered with eggs!

Bat was not missed until they decided to finish their interrupted meal. After loud calls, Lumpy spied him

halfway over to Rust Island pushing an old railroad tie ahead of him, with his clothes lashed to it.

Tim's gang were all down at the little cove inspecting the boat and disputing over its contents, so Bat was not discovered. He waded ashore, dressed, then hurriedly approached the Rafferty tent, squirmed under the cloth and seized a bird gun and several shells. Then he made his way into the woods just back of the camp and fired four or five times as rapidly as possible.

Bat now lost no time, but hurried to the beach where he saw that all but Tim had gone into the woods to see what the shots meant. The gallant leader was sitting in the stern cutting a large watermelon. Bat slipped down the beach, dropped his gun, and jumped aboard and grabbed Tim. The two at once rolled in a heap on the provisions. Bat was not so large as Tim but he had the advantage of taking him by surprise. Quickly he stuffed a handkerchief into the bully's mouth — there was no chance for an outcry.

Tim struggled hard, but Bat hugged him so that he could not use his hands to remove the gag. The two boys rolled over and over in the heap of stores, but Bat finally managed to get hold of a rope that had been used for a stern line. Then the frantic Tim was bound ankle and wrist and lashed securely to the thwart. The victorious Bat lost no time in shoving off into the fast gathering darkness.

Tim's gang had just given up the search of their island, when the *Rosa Lee* grounded on the beach in front of the bungalow.

"What'll we do with him?" Bat asked.

"We'll stand anchor watch over him," Gus laughed, "until —"

"Yes, you'd better!" sneered Tim, then, ripping out a string of oaths, he said:

"I c'n lick any feller in your push — fair 'n' square fight."

"Look here, Tim," Gus explained. "We aren't looking for a scrap. Any one looking for that generally gets what's coming to him."

"I know yer ain't. Yer're a-scared!"

"We won't argue it. But have you had any supper, Tim?"

"In course I hain't."

"Scoop, give Rafferty the best supper the place affords, but two of you stand by and watch him."

There was no trouble during the night, but the prisoner was obliged to sleep with his wrists and ankles bound. In the morning Gus said he thought he could bring Tim around to the right way of thinking, if they would leave the matter to him.

"Well, Tim," Gus began, "we've nothing against you. Everything'll be forgotten, if you'll give us your word of honor you'll not try to damage any of our property again. I know all about the sinking of the *Ethelinda* and the attempt to do it the second time. And, of course, every one knows how you queered us from winning that race. I could have sent you away for what you've done, but —"

"You dare'sn't, 'n' if my push was any good they'd have got me away from here before this."

"Tim, can't you see that I don't want any trouble?"

"Yep, you're a-scared, but I'll fight yer to see whether yer lets me go or no."

"Now, Tim, what would a fellow gain by fighting?"

"You're afraid! I'd beat yer to a jelly 'n' they'd have ter send yer home in a paper bag."

"Like the one that got all that yellow on you?" Bat asked, unwisely.

Nothing Gus could say was of any avail now, for the bully demanded the privilege of fighting for his freedom. Tim became so abusive and so insistent that Gus was afraid of him, that finally Gus startled all hands by exclaiming:

"I'll spar you for points."

"What!" bellowed the bully. "Why, I'll eat you alive!"

"It's to be boxing, no slugging," Gus stipulated. "Mr. Grainger'll be referee. Now, how many rounds, Tim?"

"Rounds? Yer won't last one!"

"What do you say to ten?" Gus asked calmly.

"Oh, any old thing! But yer're going ter get hurt!"

The two boys faced each other, while Mr. Grainger, watch in hand, stood ready to call time.

"Mind now," he warned, "this'll be decided on points. No rough work!"

As the referee gave the word, the burly Tim rushed forward, but Gus side-stepped easily and landed lightly on his opponent's face. Tim's tactics were rush, rush, boring in with arms beating like hammers. But Gus met each rush with light lefts and rights to the face and side-stepped out of danger. The more Tim missed, the more excited he got. Finally, he lost all judgment, and he had just taken a step backward, shut both eyes, and started to butt, when the referee yelled:

"Time. None of that there, Tim."

As the boxers came up for the second round, Gus cooly taunted:

"I thought you could box, Tim!"

With a roar Tim shot out for the jaw, but Gus let the blow slide off his neck and countered heavily on the nose drawing blood. Tim was in a bad way now. Gus landed on both eyes and slowly sent in stinging rights and lefts to the face. By the opening of the third round Tim could hardly see. His face was cut to ribbons and he was puffing like a porpoise in his vain efforts to land a knockout on the scientific Gus. Twice he tried for a clinch to save his breath, but the order came:

"Break away."

As the referee broke them the second time, the now desperate Tim lunged viciously for the stomach, which had it landed, would have settled the battle.

"Foul. Square deal. Fair play," echoed the onlookers, while the referee warned:

"Any more of that, Rafferty, and out you go."

"So it's slugging you want, is it?" Gus taunted. "I'll give it to you."

That was too much for Tim; he rushed in madly swinging his arms like flails, but Gus stepped in and out jabbing to the nearly closed eyes and bleeding nose. But Tim was not to be denied; he rushed again and again only to be met by the stinging jabs from an opponent he could no longer see. The round had only thirty seconds to go, when Tim made a terrific rush in an endeavor to land a haymaker which he started from the ground. Gus side-stepped and shot fair to the jaw. Tim straightened up at the impact.

"Amidships," Bat yelled.

And the young skipper planted left and right, right and left on the badly tired champion's wind.

"Aloft!" came the cry, and with one final blow to the jaw the champion of the Union Hillers was down and out.

"Where am I?" asked the bully a few minutes later as he came to and recognized Scoop bathing his cut face.

"Have you had enough, Tim?" Gus asked, wanting to have things settled for all time.

"I — I've had enough!" mumbled Tim feebly, "but, say, yer're some fighter!"

"But I don't go in for fighting," Gus answered.

"Well, I'll shake hands if *you* will," Tim offered. "Fer a long time I thought every one uv you's fellers was a tenderfoot, but I kin see now yer hain't stuck up at all. Yer used me bully after all I done agin yer — that's what I say — 'n' me 'n' the gang'll root fer yous always!"

"Fellows," announced Gus, as he grasped his opponent's hand, " let me introduce you to our *friend* Tim Rafferty."

Chapter XXI

SLAYTON'S NEW SCHOONER

"WELL, what's the news here, mother?" Gus asked on his return from Squam.

"Why, burglars blew the safe open at the glue works and took a large amount of money. It was done some time last night and this morning's paper said there were indications that all these breaks are perpetrated by the same parties."

"It certainly looks like it," Captain McKenzie observed.

"The paper went on to say that the glue works offer a reward of five hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of the burglars, and that the police will watch every outlet from town, even holding up motor boats."

"What other news is there?" Gus asked.

"The real news," the Captain answered, "is the launching of Slayton's new schooner. According to the talk, all Cape Ann will be at Essex to-morrow."

"Gee, I wouldn't miss that for anything!" Gus exclaimed. "I'll skip over and round up the fellows."

"I'm staying to see it myself. I want to know what she looks like, for, I understand, Slayton's made bets that she'll outsail the *Maine Girl*."

Bright and early next morning Gus started for town and on the way met one of his new cronies, the captain of a beam-trawler.

"How are you, Captain?" hailed Gus.

"Fine and dandy!"

"What's the news?"

"Well, fust goin' off she's paying bully! Next, I'm looking for a feller to run my injine. Thar's a feller named Andrews lives near the line — I don't 'zactly know whether it's in Essex or Wes' Gloucester — who can't be beat runnin' an injine either in a boat or in an auto. I'd go over ter see him myself but I can't git away from this tarnation craft."

"Can't I do it for you?" Gus offered.

"Course you c'n, if yer would, 'n' much obleeged. Yer git off the car at a kind o' lane or wood road, right near Burnham's farm and walk in 'bout a mile 'n' a half to where they've got a portable sawmill."

"Oh, I'll find it all right. Any other news?"

"Yaas, the glue works is offering a reward of five hundred dollars fer the arrest and conviction o' them burglars."

"What do you think of the new schooner, Cap'n?"

"Wall, I seen her 'tuther arternoon, and — I hate to say it, but —"

"But what, Cap'n?"

"Wall, I'm a-feard she'll be queen o' the fleet and lick the *Maine Girl*."

"Gee, I hope not! But there's the car."

Wetmore's yard was a festive place when Gus arrived. All roads led to Essex that day and all Cape Ann seemed to have come to the launching. As Gus was pushing his way through the throng, Bat spied him and yelled:

"Hello, there, Gus. Just in time! Uncle El and our push are right over here under the schooner's bow. Come on and I'll get a waiter to bring you some grub."

Gus sat down on a log and Bat hailed a waiter:

"Here, bring a plateful here."

"Dis chile," the colored man replied, "ain't gwine to gib you boys no mo'. Dat fat un's like to bus'!"

"What!" Bat exclaimed.

"What's the trouble here?" asked a tall, rawboned elderly man, who had been superintending the business of launching. His clean-shaven face with its square chin and an ever-present unlighted cigar in his mouth together with the determined expression of one who commands at once suggested Admiral Farragut. It was "Danie" Wetmore, the famous Essex builder.

"Give these boys all they can hold," Mr. Wetmore ordered.

"Gee," mumbled Lumpy, with his mouth full. "It must — have — cost — Slayton — a roll to feed this crowd."

"Aw, he wet his salt years ago," Bat answered decisively. "He's got dough enough."

The boys joined Captain McKenzie and Uncle El Higgins on top of a pile of staging where they could see everything there was to be seen.

"Pretty steep climb for a man of your years, Uncle El," shouted Mr. Slayton as Uncle El climbed up. "Just how old are you, Uncle?"

"A man's no older than he feels — he is not!" the veteran replied, sarcastically.

"How d'you like her, Archie?" the owner asked.

"She's a beauty, Mr. Slayton, no mistake. She couldn't be otherwise with Danie Wetmore having all to do with it. But I've still got faith in the *Maine Girl*."

"I must say I like your candor and the way you stick up for your own vessel."

"Come aboard, Dora," Bat called to Miss Rafferty, who now appeared near the lumber.

"'Fain would I climb, yet I fear to fall,'" came the reply.

But Dora was game, she had put on her brother's clothes and climbed to the crosstrees more than once, and a little thing like a pile of lumber could not stop her.

"How do you like her, Dora?" Gus asked, as she seated herself.

"She's a peach, a pippin! Just get on to how beautifully her bilges are eased — just before they merge into her counter. That's a decided improvement and 'll make her steer easier and straighter when the wind's on the quarter and a heavy sea running. What? Oh, yes, I know something about schooners."

"There's many a seafaring man who'd never notice the fine points Dora's just mentioned," said Captain McKenzie, who had noticed them himself with some uneasiness. "Anything else unusual about her, Dora?"

"No. Danie's got them so nigh perfection that they're like two peas in a pod and she's almost a replica of the *Maine Girl*."

"Well, they've nearly got her listed," Gus remarked, "and pretty soon —"

"What's that?" asked a Boston reporter.

"Tell him, Dora," Gus said. "Heave away!"

Miss Rafferty gave a bow and said:

"'Knowledge is gold to him who can discern, that he who loves to know, must love to learn.'"

"Aw, cut that," Bat remonstrated. "Give it straight, Dora. Heave away and spin the yarn."

"Well," said Dora, "don't you see some men on this

side of the vessel screwing up a planker-jack, while others are tightening up the shores with wedges?"

"Yes, but I didn't notice it before," the reporter answered.

"Well, you see it now, and if you looked on the other side of the vessel, you'd see some more men moving shores out so she'll list towards them. They'll continue this tightening on one side and slacking on the other till the schooner heels slightly to starboard with her bilge resting on a thick plank that's laid on a single well-greased launchway. That's the Essex method."

"But how do they make her start?"

"Well, you see the top piece of nearly every keel block has a place cut out of it about an inch deep into which the keel fits loosely. This jog or cut is greased and when they're ready, Danie'll give the signal and a whole mob of men'll take mauls and —"

Bang! Smash! Whang! Smash! Bang! came the deafening sounds as the men drove the wedges between the upper part of each keel block and the thick part below it. The wedge-driving continued, while the famous builder stood on a high pile of lumber and looked far off across the miles of salt marsh to see if the tug was in sight.

At last he waved his hand and the driving of the wedges ceased. Then he turned to a crowd at the bow of the vessel and asked:

"All ready, up there?"

"Yes," answered a pretty girl.

"Well, the tug's coming now and it's high water. We'll start her."

A wave of the hand and "Whang! Smash! Bang! Whang! Bang!" was all that could be heard as the

THE BEAUTIFUL SCHOONER SLID FASTER AND FASTER

wedges raised the heavy vessel until she rested only on greased places. Then Mr. Wetmore roared:

"Now!"

"*Sea Queen,*" the girl shouted, as she smashed a bottle against the quivering bow. Slowly at first, then with gathering momentum, the beautiful schooner slid faster and faster. She plunged and then, flying light, scoomed out on to the river.

"I'm sorry, Archie," Mr. Wetmore declared, when the cheering had subsided enough for him to make himself heard, "very sorry, but I'm pretty sure this vessel will be what her name implies. It'll depend, however, a great deal on the handling."

"Well, I'll not admit defeat, till I'm defeated," Captain McKenzie answered. "Meantime, between you and me and the mainmast, Danie, keep plenty of oak 'n' iron on hand. Stand by 'n' keep handy for a call."

"Oh, I'll fix you up in record time, if it's necessary," he answered, significantly. "But, folks, you'd better get aboard, if you'd like to ride around the Cape. The tug has the schooner alongside the old wharf yonder. So get aboard as quick as you can. The tide's dropping 'n' we've only a mud hole here at low water."

"So long, fellows," Gus yelled. "I'm off for Essex woods to hunt up an engineer. Business, strictly business! Hey, Uncle El?"

"Wa-ll," drawled the veteran, dryly, "we won't get much done to-day, but we'll give her fits to-morrow."

The tug whistled vociferously, and then, hitched very short, she towed ahead down the tortuous curves of the narrow river. Presently the river widened from little more than a crooked creek through the salt sedges

to a small bay. Then they passed through a rock strewn passage where on a beautifully wooded hillside summer cottages nestled among the pines.

At last they passed out of the mouth of the river. Toot went the whistle, more hawser was paid out and the tug, now a long way ahead, began thumping and bucking into a nasty head sea.

"How she pitches!" some one exclaimed.

"This is nothing," Miss Rafferty answered. "Wait till we're past Halibut Point. Then, you'll see her roll, too. She'll be right in the trough of it, when we're abreast of the Salvages."

"Did you fellows notice those new business men prying into every nook and corner when we were below?" Scoop asked. "Steinberg and Apfelbaum, the men who run the movies, poked into everything."

"No more'n any of the others did, as far as I could see," Dogger answered.

"I wasn't particularly prepossessed with the appearance of those newcomers," said Uncle El, who had not heard a word of their talk. "I didn't like them when they came to town. I wouldn't have any dealings with them — not by a plaguy sight — I would not."

"Gee!" Bat exclaimed suddenly.

"What is it?" Flip asked.

"Nothing much. I was just thinking it would have been great if Gus had been with us when we were down in the fo'castle. I'm pretty sure they were talking German and Gus learned that on the East Side."

Chapter XXII

THE TRIAL TRIP

THE riggers were busy on the *Sea Queen* as she lay at the wharf in Gloucester. Both topmasts were on end and perfectly stayed and Gus, who had been busy watching the work, turned just as Palmer Tabling came down the dock.

"That's the largest suit," declared the sailmaker, "that the Leach and Roach Company ever made for a fisherman! But have you heard the news? There was another burglary last night. This time a large grocery store."

"It's a wonder the detectives haven't caught 'em!"

"They probably will now, for the Board of Commerce has offered a thousand dollar reward for their arrest and conviction."

"Well, I hope they catch 'em."

"Hello, my boy!" called Mr. Slayton, slapping Gus on the shoulder. "Be sure and come with us to-morrow. The trial trip starts at nine-thirty."

"Oh, thank you, sir. I'm very much interested in every new vessel."

As Gus went up town after another look at the new pride of Essex, he met Miss Rafferty and told her of Tim's reform.

"You're a brick!" she exclaimed. "I'm much pleased!"

"Oh, never mind that! But, to change the subject, how nigh are you to that box of chocolates?"

"'Silence is golden,'" was the significant reply.

"Are you going on the trial trip, Dora?"

"Yes, for I have to send in a story of it; but I ought to stay ashore and —"

"And what, Dora? More clues?"

"'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' I shan't put you wise."

The first one to greet Gus the next morning as he pushed through the crowd boarding the *Sea Queen* was Miss Rafferty. The visitors overflowed the vessel and at last the skipper held up a warning hand and sang out:

"Avast there! No more. We've all there's room for. Single up."

With all new bunting flying, Old Glory at the peak, her huge white mainsail set, and an immense white swallow-tail with red borders with *Sea Queen* in red letters at the main truck and the Yacht Club flag at the fore, the beautiful, one-hundred-and-sixty-ton vessel backed into the stream.

The foresail and head-sails were set and with a kick from her propeller the schooner got steerage-way and headed down the harbor. One by one the fishing fleet was also getting under way.

"There goes Gannet Thompson!" some one exclaimed.

"Yes, and there's 'Powder Face' making sail. 'Grand Bank Horse' is under way. 'Pig Iron' will catch 'em 'fore he gets by the Londoner. Look out for 'Three Story Angus' with that new fore-topmast!"

The kites were set on the *Sea Queen* and with a light westerly air she fanned down the harbor and slipped by the older vessels as though they were anchored.

As they drew abreast of Norman's Woe, Mr. Slayton asked:

"Well, skipper, how about her?"

"She'll wallop anything yet built. See if she don't. I c'n steer her with my little finger!"

The *Sea Queen* showed her heels to three Boston bound schooners and then squared away for home. Gus had turned out at three that morning, and when Faun Bar was abeam, Dora said:

"You look tired, Gus. Why don't you hunt up a snug spot and turn in?"

"Gee!" Gus yawned, "I think I will."

As he started to go forward, Dora murmured,

"I'm not particularly stuck on those three Germans — the one who bought out the music store's too fresh!"

"Oh, Mueller! No, I don't like the appearance of any of that crowd!"

"Then," Dora went on, "there's the pair who run the movie show. They're not here. These fellows chum with them a good deal."

"Yes, I've noticed it. But it beats all how they've been taken into the inner circles by all the business men!"

"Oh, these fellows know their number," Dora answered. "They subscribe liberally to everything."

Gus went to the forecastle and 'way in the eyes of her stretched out in an upper bunk for a nap. How long the boy had been sleeping he could not guess, but suddenly he woke up with the feeling that the vessel must be nearly back to Gloucester and he was about to jump down from his bunk, when he heard voices.

The men were playing cards and talking German, and Gus guessed at once there was mischief brewing.

Mueller was doing most of the talking in a low tone, but finally he exclaimed with an air of finality:

"This evening — about midnight."

"Speak softly," said one of the men. "Perhaps some one can hear you."

"Ach," said Mueller, disdainfully, "dere's Down East no vuns vhat spiks Cherman."

"Don't be too sure of that," Gus thought to himself.

The *Sea Queen* was moored alongside the wharf at the Fort.

"She'll be nice and handy there," said the skipper. "As soon as we get our ice and dories aboard to-morrow, we'll be off for Georges."

"You hear dis, vhat he shust said it?" mumbled Mueller to one of his pals, but not in so low a tone as to escape Gus.

The *Maine Girl* was lying alongside the wharf, and Gus went aboard to visit the crew.

"You sure missed something this time, Gus!" exclaimed Si Pepper, as Gus dropped into the forecastle.

"Tell us, Si!"

"Wall, we'd got up to the Cape Shore and there was nary a sign of mackerel, not one. No sea geese or gannets in sight, so the skipper decided to run for the Strait o' Canso and the North Shore.

"We was some past Little Hope Island, when the lookout sings out, 'School O!'

"We sure went after 'em, and chased 'em the best part o' an hour. But there was a Novy vessel come out from behind Mouton Island and they beat us to 'em. The Cap'n was standing on the seine watchin' when he shouted, 'They've dived! They're just outside! Puss him in.'

"And we got 'em all 'n' the Novy's boat, too."

"Gee, I wish I'd seen that!" Gus exclaimed heartily. "But good-by, Si, I'm due up town."

Chapter XXIII

THE CHASE AND CAPTURE

TEN o'clock was striking as Gus went into the lunch counter in the basement of the Lermont. The place was crowded and every high stool was in use except one at the end where the basement extended under the sidewalk. Gus reached the empty stool and greeted the lunch man:

"Good evening, Henry. How do you find yourself?"

"Pretty well, but very busy!"

Gus began to think that all Cape Ann had suddenly discovered an appetite and, as he waited, his head dropped forward on to his folded arms. But as his head dropped he saw in the mirror opposite, three men sitting at the table behind him — they were the ones who had played cards on the schooner.

All drowsiness vanished. He kept his head bowed, as if he were asleep, and listened.

"Shelbourne, bank, large cash deposit, transfer of island, good chauffeur and good sailor, fast schooner," came in fragments. Gus had no doubt that this was the gang responsible for the recent burglaries. Their plans were evident. They would steal the *Sea Queen*, he felt sure. They ought to be arrested.

"But, gee!" he thought. "Here are five prominent business men in town! I'm the only one who suspects them. Why, only to-night they subscribed the heaviest of all towards the fund to offer a reward for the arrest

and conviction of the burglars! And there's not an officer in sight, even if he'd believe me!"

At half past ten, the men got up to go, but Gus remained a moment longer apparently still asleep. When he felt sure that they had gone up the steps into the alley which led to the street, he jumped off the stool and began to worm his way through the crowd. But his progress was slow, and as he hurried up Main Street, the men were not in sight. The search was obviously hopeless in the teeming throng, but Gus kept on.

"Gee!" he thought to himself, when quarter past eleven came, "if those fellows mean to take the schooner to-night, it's a sure thing they'll rob some place before they go. The skipper and crew'll be aboard by twelve, sure, and the burglary's probably going on now. I'd better look along Rogers Street at the rear of all the big places."

Gus was walking along the back street, when he saw a shrunken figure come out of a lane. It was El Higgins. The aged joiner was making "short hitches," and as Gus hurried up to him he groaned:

"I've just come from a(hic) palm garden — I ha-ve!"

"I see you have, Uncle El, but have you seen any men going down this way?"

"Yes, not over two(hic) minutes ago — it was not. They went towards the Fort — they did; while I rested in the lane. They were not Guinnies — not by a plaguy sight — they were not."

"Well, Uncle El, I must hurry. So long!"

"Oh, we-ll, if there's trouble, I'll be in it, too. I'll come right along — I will," and he followed uncertainly in the boy's wake.

Gus was nearly down to the two schooners when he

saw the *Ethelinda* which Bat had taken to give Tim Rafferty and the Union Hillers for a long day's outing. They were just landing.

"Hey, fellows," Gus shouted. "Have you seen any men pass down towards those — Great Scot! They're off! Come on — the whole of you!"

The crowd rushed after Gus to the *Maine Girl*.

"Is father there?" he shouted to the rudely awakened McLain.

"No, he went to visit a lodge at Rockport and he'll stop at home when he gets back. But what's the row?"

"Those new business men are stealing the *Sea Queen!*" Gus answered. "They're the burglars. We've got to chase 'em in the *Maine Girl*, or they'll get away!"

"Wall," said McLain, slowly, "Archie's backed you up in everything you've ever done, and I'm pretty sure, he'll back you up in this. You're so sure those are the burglars who've just skipped out under power, why I'm inclined to say — go ahead."

"We've no time to go up into the city to telephone to father," Gus explained, "nor would we be at all sure of reaching him till he gets home. I'll risk it with him, so fellows, get your guns out of the sloop. Single up, Mac."

Just as the last line was cast off and McLain was about to order the engineer to back her, a trembling voice came unsteadily out of the darkness:

"Ho-ld on! I'll get there — I generally do. And I'll show 'em conclusively what kind o' a hairpin El Higgins is."

There was no time for an argument, and the veteran was soon on the deck of the *Maine Girl* in hot pursuit of the *Sea Queen*.

"Now what are your plans for getting that gang,

Gus?" asked McLain, as the schooner cleared the breakwater at Dog Bar and they could make out the new vessel a long way ahead laying a course to the eastward.

"Ye-s," drawled Uncle El, "a good general always maps out his campaign in advance — he does. Let's hear yours, Gus."

"Well, there's a small gang of only five on the —"

"Six. I counted," Bat interrupted.

"Six, then," Gus agreed. "But you better believe they're well armed with the latest thing in shooting irons. The only way to get 'em is by strategy."

"You've hit the nail on the head — you ha-ve," drawled Mr. Higgins. "It reminds me of the battle of —"

"But," Bat broke in — he had heard Uncle El fight his old engagements before, "I don't see how all the strategy in the world's goin' to give us a chance to get those fellows."

"Here's my plan in a bunt," Gus explained. "We'll disguise the *Maine Girl* by sending down her fore-topmast and while it's dark sew some large dirty patches on both sides of her jib and foresail, and at daybreak keep her off a half point so they'll not think we're chasing 'em. By the time we've run her off out of sight from aloft, we'll haul up again with the engine goin', and then we c'n remove our patches, send up the topmast and sneak into Shelbourne ahead of 'em. After we anchor in Gunning Cove, they'll see nothing but our two topmasts until they've run by to the upper harbor."

"But even then," Lumpy interposed, "you haven't told us how you'll nab 'em."

"We'll probably do it like this. While they land to rob the Shelbourne bank, we'll take all the firearms we've

got and hide on the *Sea Queen*, and as it will be done at night we can easily take them by surprise when they come back on board."

"Well done!" exclaimed Uncle El. "I couldn't have mapped it out better myself, and I was — when leaving Atlanta — acting adjutant-general. Go ahead, Gus, and we'll show 'em conclusively what kind of trees make shingles!"

The schooner was soon disguised and both vessels bowled along with a west-northwest breeze at steamer speed. The *Sea Queen* held her lead until the middle of the forenoon, but then Mac started the engine and the Slayton vessel was soon a mere speck on the weather quarter.

At eight o'clock that night the *Maine Girl* was hauled up on to a straight course that would just clear the rocks off Cape Sable, and with no lights and engine running full speed she was fairly flying.

"We'll get there first!" Gus exclaimed in his exultation. "If — What's that? The engine's stopped! What in time's the matter?"

The engineer worked all night and it was not until the wee small hours of the morning that the engine started again.

"We'll have to steal into harbor behind them and anchor below Sandy Point on the east side instead of Gunning Cove," Gus declared. "They won't rob the bank till night comes, so we've still got a chance to catch 'em."

But the engine went wrong again, and it was not until late afternoon that the disgusted engineer tossed his monkey wrench and Stilson into the tool box and grunted:

"Gosh darn yer! Now, ye'll go."

They passed Baccaro Point just before dawn and when Cape Negro was abeam, Gus summoned his forces.

"Mac," he said, "keep a course as though we were bound along the coast. Run right by Cape Roseway — on McNutt's Island — until we can't be seen from up in Shelbourne. Then we'll skip along the east shore up to Sandy Point. Now what have we got for weapons?"

Mac unearthed a rifle, shotgun and revolver which belonged to Captain McKenzie, and a rifle and revolver of his own. The men mustered two revolvers forward, while the boys had nearly all brought some sort of gun from the *Ethelinda*.

"How about handcuffs, Mac?" Gus asked.

"Plenty, but I'll have to bu'st Archie's chest to get 'em. I don't like to do it."

"Go ahead. I'll fix it with — Say," he fairly yelled, "if that isn't the *Sea Queen* hove down in that narrow passage between McNutt's and the west shore!"

"It's her, all right," Mac agreed. "And they were outward bound when she grounded — she's headed this way."

"Well," Gus went on, "we'll keep on as we're going till McNutt's Island shuts us from their view. Then we'll haul up and run in a little way, anchor the schooner and all hands row over to McNutt's and land right under the cliff at Cape Roseway Lighthouse."

"What will be the program, then?" Bing asked.

"We'll carry our guns, but two or three of us'll take glasses and climb to the best place to observe the enemy."

"But you aren't going to fight 'em, are you, Gus?" Lumpy asked. "Some of us might get killed."

"If you folks will stand by me, we'll get possession of

the *Sea Queen* before the tide floats her again — if possible, by strategy."

The *Maine Girl* was soon at anchor, and the crew piled into the boat and pulled away for Cape Roseway. The boat was drawn up and Gus, Bat and Bing climbed a winding path to the top of the sixty-foot cliff. They quickly focused their glasses on the schooner, but not a soul was in sight. They would have thought that she was abandoned, except for the dory hanging by its painter and thumping under her counter.

"Good day, boys," suddenly interrupted a voice. "I'm the lighthouse keeper. That's a queer gang on that air hooker."

"Are they aboard now?" Gus asked.

"Yes, and dead drunk. Leastways they was all on 'em asleep 'n' lying pell-mell on the deck aft near the wheel when I rowed by a little while ago."

"How long's she been aground?" Flip inquired.

"Since jest about daybreak. I seen her comin' along makin' fer this here passage with a nice little breeze o' wind off the land, and sech goin's on! Them fellers seemed more like a crowd o' picknickers than fishermen. They was hootin' 'n' hollerin' 'n' passin' bottles to each other, when all of a suddin' she fetched up. Thar she'll stay till high water, I reckon."

"But it's not far from high water now," said Gus. "And she's partly water borne — she's righting!"

"Ya-as, she'll float in jest about an hour. But are them fellers friends o' yourn?"

"Well, they sailed from the town we did. But how did they get the sail off of her, when they were so drunk?"

"Wa-ll, they managed after a fashion, though one

feller come pretty nigh gettin' drownded. They hauled him in jest in time."

Gus led his companions down the cliff, and then the seine boat rowed double banked swept quickly around the northern end of the island, and Mac steered her straight for the west shore. Gus tore some old parceling into squares and each oarsman tucked a square into his rowlock. When they were a quarter of a mile to windward of the schooner, Gus held up his hand and asked:

"Is every one here game?"

"Yes," came the subdued reply.

"Then, we'll pull for the schooner's weather quarter with as little noise as possible, and when we get there, you, Dogger, look after the painter, and the rest of us'll climb over the rail and try to take 'em by surprise."

The boat approached the vessel. Now she was alongside, and Dogger had a couple of half hitches with the painter around the starboard after swifter of the main shrouds. Loud snores were the only sounds as the crew climbed over the rail. There, stretched out in a heap of dirt and rubbish, lay the six men.

Mac and his men were ready to slip on the handcuffs, and all would have gone well had it not been for Tim Rafferty. Uncle El was anxious to be in on the seizure, but he could not climb over the rail.

"Jump down here, one of you," he whispered to Tim and his gang, "and give me a leg up. If I once get aboard, I can fight equally well as the other fellow — I can."

"You're too old," Tim whispered. "You'll get hurt."

Uncle El was furious and made a lunge at Tim with his cane which missed the boy but came down on the rail with a whack. The noise awoke Mueller, just as

Long Jim reached down and drew Uncle El on deck. The gangster sensed the situation, and, hauling a revolver from under him, aimed at Gus.

Bang went the gun, but revolver and bullet went down in the scuppers as the burglar pulled the trigger, and his arm was broken by a cane wielded by Uncle El Higgins.

Chapter XXIV

A BOY SKIPPER AND A BOY CREW

THERE was a lively scrimmage for a moment, but the crew soon overpowered the burglars. By the time they were in double irons, the schooner was afloat, and Gus at once took command.

"Bing, you're appointed engineer, so back us out o' this."

"Ay, ay, sir. Back her it is!"

Gus headed for the *Maine Girl* and ordered:

"Mac, get all the *Maine Girl* crowd into the boat. We haven't a minute to spare. They've telegraphed for the cutter and there she is down to the east'ard off Gull Rock. If they overhaul us, they'll take the vessel and the prisoners away from us and we'll lose the reward. It'll take months of time and fathoms of red tape before Mr. Slayton gets his schooner."

As the *Sea Queen* swept past the *Maine Girl*, Mac slipped the painter and shouted:

"I'll slip my cable. With sea room and four lowers, no cutter can catch us!"

Gus now bossed the job of hoisting the stiff new sails on the *Sea Queen*. The halliards were reeved to snatch blocks, carried to the engine, and in half an hour all sail was set. The wind was light and blowing from the westward, and Gus ordered:

"Full and by, there. Don't crowd her."

"Full and by, sir," answered Dogger at the wheel.

"Now," said the skipper, "Uncle El, you mount guard over the prisoners, while we see if we can shake that cutter."

The cutter was obviously more interested in the new vessel than in the older one, for it had doubtless been reported that the men who had robbed the bank were on the *Sea Queen*. The revenue craft had crept up and was now but half a mile astern on the weather quarter. But Danie Wetmore had not built in vain, and with everything pulling, and the engine running at top notch, it was soon apparent that the cutter was no match for the new schooner.

"All hands, below," suddenly bellowed the boy skipper. "They're going to fire. Take the prisoners down. Dogger, I'll take the wheel."

"Do you suppose El Higgins is afraid of a little powder?" asked the veteran. "Humph! You should have seen me at the battle of —"

"Below there — at once," ordered Gus in tones even Uncle El could hear. The skipper was sitting on the deck under the lee of the wheel box, where he could watch the lift of the headsails and steer by grasping one of the bottom spokes.

The deck was clear. All had obeyed orders although there were mutterings and growlings. Bat, most of all, would have liked to share the danger, but he convinced the rest by saying:

"To pull this thing off, we must have discipline. If any boy fails to obey an order, the minute it's given, I'll break his head!"

Boom! went the cannon. Splash! almost instantly, as the solid shot hit the water to leeward.

"Poor shot!" Gus muttered to Uncle El, whose head appeared a moment at the companionway.

"But we're dropping her fast — we are. I can see her topsails getting lower over the taffrail — I can!"

"Can you see the *Maine Girl?*"

"Ye-s, she's a mile on our lee quarter 'n' going like sixty — she —"

Boom! Crash! and a shot, better aimed than the first, knocked twenty feet off the starboard bulwarks and demolished the booby hatch in the waist.

Gus turned pale, but he kept a rap-jam full on her. The next shot fell astern and Uncle El reported:

"Out of danger now. The cutter's trying to head off the *Maine Girl* — she is."

"All hands on deck," ordered the skipper. "Bat, have the pump started. If she's leaking, search at once to see where the shot went out."

"Ay, ay sir." And a moment later, "Pump sucks, sir. The shot lost its headway, when it smashed the lee coaming. It's over on the port side in the coil of rope cable."

"Hello!" exclaimed the skipper. "See us fall off. The wind's shifting — it's backed out here s'utheast. Clew up the foretops'l and down stays'l. Ready about. Ha-rd a-lee."

"The cutter's jig's up," chuckled Lumpy. "This shift of wind's placed Mac to wind'ard of him and the *Maine Girl* is romping away for home like a house afire!"

The cutter fired a parting shot which did not come within half a mile of its target, and then squared away for the coast.

"Now, fellows," Gus sang out, "it's going to be a battle royal from here to Cape Ann. It doesn't matter if father is the principal owner of the *Maine Girl*, if this

wagon's faster, we might as well be the ones to find it out as any one else. Turn to 'n' rope off that broken bulwark with plenty of life lines. We'll sock it to her!"

The fore-topsail and staysail were set again and the *Sea Queen* was holding her own with the older vessel. Gus lifted her before they reached Brazil Rock, and when the *Maine Girl* was even abreast, he went to the rail and shouted:

"Mac, I'll race you to Gloucester, neither vessel to use engine — a battle royal!"

"All right. We're nose and nose now. Let's be off."

Gus up helm and the *Sea Queen* responded like a thing of life, and the skipper soon called Dogger to the wheel.

"Full and by."

"Full and by, sir."

Followed by most of the crew, Gus now entered the cabin and looked over his prisoners. As he noted the sixth member of the gang, he exclaimed:

"Dilly Darlington! Well, I'll be blowed!"

Dillingham Darlington, a well-known young man around Gloucester, drawled, languidly:

"So you've recognized me at last!"

"Yes, but I'm really surprised to see you in such company!"

"Really!" sneered Darlington.

"Yes, really and absolutely!"

"When you get through with this scrape, young man," advised Uncle El, "you'll find it pays to walk the straight and narrow path — it —"

"Oh, cut it out! You've preached us to death for the last half hour."

"Yes, idt's petter you shase you'selluf," added Mueller whose arm Gus and Bat now prepared to put into splints.

As Gus rolled up his sleeves for the job at hand, the patient burst out with:

"Himmel, I tot me dot I hadt seen you pefore, now I bin sure of idt! Idts petter dot me unt der oldt vomans hadt nefer sviped der paby mit der marks idts left arm on!"

"What!" exclaimed Gus, excitedly, "Do you know who I am?"

"Yaw, aber I don'd vas dell you apoud idt."

Nonplused, for the time being, the young skipper ordered the prisoners closely guarded. Then Scoop was set to work to feed all hands, while the two schooners raced on, their masts groaning and straining almost to the breaking point.

"Bat," Gus said late in the afternoon, "you're the first officer. You 'n' I'll hunt for the plunder."

They found nothing in the cabin, and Bat growled:

"Skates and dogfish, I'm stumped!"

"You're easy. Look in the lazaret."

"Gee, I never thought of that. I *am* dead easy 'n' no mistake! I'll take my flashlight and crawl in."

Bat prowled around for a few minutes in the stuffy place, and after he had capsized several coils of Manilla he exclaimed:

"Eureka! Grab these, Gus. I'll pass 'em out — 'I will!'"

The three large valises were soon in the middle of the cabin floor and their wealth of gold, silver, bank notes and securities spread about.

"Skates and dogfish!" cried Bat. "Why here's the loot from all the Cape Ann breaks and, look, this parcel here's all Canadian stuff."

"Say, Darlington," Gus began, "how about—"

"Oh, I know I'm in bad, but my folks have a pull and I'sh'll not serve long. So, when I've done my bit, Mr. Gus, look out. I'll get even with you, as sure as my name's Dilly Darlington!"

"Now, harsh words won't do any good," offered Gus. "But, possibly, if you tell all you know, you'll be dealt with leniently, and I advise you to tell us about the whole affair."

"Well, in the first place," said the disgruntled young man, "I want you to understand that I can sail a schooner as well as you can. If I'd taken the eastern passage coming out, I'd been on my way, instead of here."

"Were you mixed up in all these breaks?"

"No, only in the one the night we sailed, when they robbed the bank where I worked, and in the Shelbourne job."

"He's a liar!" yelled Mueller. "He buts der gang vise to ven der blaces vas flush; unt he gifs us der inside track mit der bank's peezness. He dells aboudt der guys dot sells der island in Nova Scotia, unt ve geds next to der date ven der vas deposit at Shelbourne, *dirty tousandt tollar!*"

As Gus carefully repacked the valise, he confided to Bat:

"Great Scot! The safe return of the schooner's nothing. I'd sail her around the world if I had to — but think — two hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars. The worry'll turn me gray!"

It was still nip and tuck between the two schooners; first one would forge ahead and then the other. They were reeling off the knots for home at a great rate. Scoom! They would glide ahead on the surge of a giant roller, pause for a moment at its summit, and then

settle into the long hollow. The crew was all gathered aft, looking out at the expanse of billowed ocean to leeward and at the spindrift as it feathered over the weather bulwarks.

Uncle El looked at the prisoners carefully and drawled,

"'Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging!'"

"What!" exclaimed the boys.

The old man nodded his head and continued:

"I ha-ve drunk enough whiskey to float an admiral and his whole fleet! I used to maintain that you can plane off a vessel — after a fashion — without a bottle — you can; but it's next to a human impossibility to detect all the inequalities without taking a drink — it is. In fact the business calls for it — it does. But I've changed my views — I ha-ve."

"Just think of the wasted time! Why Danie Wetmore told me personally, once — he did, 'Higgins, you work one day and loaf three — you do!'"

"Oh, can that!" grumbled the ex-bank clerk.

"Yes, dot oldt man chew all der time der rags!" said Mueller.

"If this young man," continued Uncle El, "had spent his evenings in proper company and kept his elbow down, he might have risen in time to a high position."

"Hear him croak!" growled Darlington.

"Now, I'm as stubborn as — as — an army mule — I am," the veteran continued, "and if I'd only used some of my obstinate qualities in the right direction, I might have been a vastly different man than I am to day, but, my friends, I shall continue to paddle my little canoe — but with no assistance from John Barleycorn!"

"Gee, won't Mr. Frame be pleased!" Gus exclaimed.

"He'll like that better than having 'his boys' catch a hundred burglars!"

"Humph!" grunted the ex-bank clerk. "The old guy's got one foot in the grave now. What good will it do him?"

"It's better late than never — it is, young man. Besides, did you ever hear of El Higgins dying yet? Oh, we-ll, I shall live to be ninety-four or five — I shall. My family's noted for longevity — it is."

As Bing relieved the wheel, Gus took a position where he could sight the *Maine Girl* by the port main topmast backstay, and shouted:

"We're all of an eighth of a mile ahead! If this breeze holds we'll get in at about two or three o'clock in the morning."

An hour before sundown, however, an occasional weather roll was noticeable and the wind soon petered out leaving the schooners slatting in the trough of an old sea. A light breeze soon sprang up from the south, but by midnight the vessels were again in the doldrums. They flopped and pitched, tossed and rolled, slatted their sails and banged their booms throughout the rest of the night.

Uncle El Higgins early joined the young skipper as he stumped the deck. "Yes," said the veteran, "it was quite sudden, my deciding to finish out life a teetotaler, but when I was helped over the rail and saw what drink had brought that gang to, I said, 'El Higgins, you're through with it — you a-r-e!'"

Gus made some rapid calculations, and declared:

"When the morning breeze comes, if we can fetch, the course 'll be nor'west — twenty-five miles to go. We're now on Stellwagen Bank."

About six o'clock he was sweeping the horizon in hopes of discovering a ripple, when he exclaimed suddenly:

"By George, Bat, here comes a beam trawler!"

The trawler was soon alongside, the situation explained and she was soon chug, chugging her way to port with the news.

The schooners were abreast and within hailing distance when the first faint rustling of idle cloth and reef points indicated that the wind had come at last. The alert young skipper of the *Sea Queen* grabbed the wheel himself to pay her off, and, as he said, "To get her on the road for home."

The *Sea Queen* sped on through the water, but the *Maine Girl* was flying too. Gus had had all the halliards jigged up at the first sign of ruffled water, but the new sails, especially the mainsail, looked more or less like bags and he had to sail her wide.

"Gee!" moaned Bat, "we'll never fetch the groaner in one leg!"

"It may back 'n' give us a slant."

"But the *Maine Girl* is laying her course!"

"She ought to with her sails all stretched and a perfect set. But are we doing anything with her, Bat?"

"Y-e-s, I fancy we've gained a trifle. What do you fellows think?"

"I'm sure of it," said Lumpy.

"Yer c'n notice it, dead easy!" added Tim.

The Cape now loomed up ahead, and the off shore breeze began to come in fitful puffs, stronger and stronger.

"We can't do better 'n' Brace's Cove, if we do that," Bat suggested. "How soon'll you go round, Gus?"

"We're doing fine now. Never say die. I'll keep on this leg for a while!"

"Gee! Here comes a dandy puff. Sock it to her, skipper!"

The young commander held her to it until her dead-eyes were awash. The next flaw came right on top of the first, and then a third — all from three points ahead.

"Clew up the fore-tops'l," Gus yelled. "Settle stays'l halliards. Up aloft, Bing, 'n' bend the other halliard on to the stays'l. Ready about! Ha-rd a-lee!"

Bang! Slat! Bang! The finest and latest of the fishing clippers shot into the wind, and the dextrous Bing snared the head of the huge staysail as she swung, and hailed the deck:

"All fast!"

Up went the fore-topsail and staysail, hoisted by an excited crew, for they had all seen from the corners of their eyes that they were likely to cross the bow of the *Maine Girl.*

"Sock it to her, Gus!" begged Bat. "Here comes a corker. Let her take it! Good-o!"

The two vessels were now tearing through the water on opposite tacks. The wind was now a regular hot weather gusty westerly, which veered a number of points in either direction. Would they cross her? In another moment the *Maine Girl* must luff or keep off, or there would be a collision!

"Here comes a beaut!" Bat yelled. "We've crossed her bow! Good-by, *Maine Girl!*"

The older vessel kept away and the new pride of Cape Ann pointed up when the flaw hit them and in a moment Uncle El, who was looking aft, said:

"She's tacked on our weather quarter — she has!"

"She'll never catch us, while Gus has the wheel!" Bat boasted. "I'll put him against any man out o' Gloucester!"

"Come, short yarns, now!" ordered the skipper. "It's nip and tuck, and I want every one ready to hear an order! How far ahead are we?"

"Three lengths, I should judge," said Lumpy.

"Well, I mustn't over stand a single foot beyond clearing Dog Bar Breakwater. Clew up the fore-tops'l. Stand by stays'l halliards. Ready about! Ha-rd a-lee!"

Around swept the *Sea Queen*, gathering more speed immediately, for just as the *Maine Girl* came tearing along on the right o' way tack, a gust came that lasted five minutes. Down, down heeled the schooners until their lee rails were well buried, but Gus would not luff an inch from a straight course up the harbor. He had crossed the older vessel's bow again and by an increased margin. On tore the schooners, with the wind gustier than ever. Just before they reached Ten Pound Island, the flaws came from far enough ahead to enable the *Maine Girl*, with her better setting canvas, to get within a length and a half of the *Sea Queen's* counter.

"Gee, but it's getting close!" growled the first officer.

"He'll never catch us!" Gus asserted. "I sh'll be able to keep her off in a minute more, when we've weathered Ten Pound Island. But look here, Bat. We're nearly in. Have them stationed for taking in sail, 'n' for letting go both anchors. I'm going to keep her moving till the last minute. We'll make a flying moor alongside the Halibut Wharf."

Gus eased away when off the island and let her romp. Now one of the gusts came off the Fort and shoved the *Sea Queen* along, while the same flaw struck the older vessel ahead, and for a moment she was all shaking. On rushed Mr. Slayton's victorious schooner under a rap-jam full, while even as he shouted, "Stand by," as he

luffed to shoot across the harbor, the air rang with cheers and the shrieks of steam whistles.

Down came the banging, fluttering canvas, but the headway was so great that Gus bellowed:

"Stand by both anchors. Let go." And the *Sea Queen* ranged alongside the Halibut Wharf with forty five fathoms of cable, from each bow, snubbing her.

Willing hands made the lines fast and a crowd jumped aboard.

"Good for you," commended Mr. Slayton, as he outdistanced Mr. Frame in the scramble to grab Gus by the hand. "You've done yourself and the vessel proud. You'll all be remembered!"

As soon as he possibly could, Gus drew his old friend and adviser aside and told him what little he knew about his early life in the East Side. Also, what the gangster had said to him.

Mr. Frame was visibly agitated until Gus told about the marks on his arm. Then he sighed, heavily, and murmured, as he glanced toward the wharf:

"It was too much to expec — Archie — here a moment!"

Captain McKenzie jumped aboard, rushed aft and picked the young skipper up and held him in the air as though he were a feather. Then, gently placing him on his feet again, he stood off and surveyed him proudly.

But the old ship-builder interrupted and asked, abruptly:

"Archie, did the baby you lost on the Sound steamer have any marks on its left arm?"

"Yes, John," the giant skipper answered, sadly, "he had. But, you know, he fell over the side and was drowned."

Mr. Frame fairly dragged the bewildered mariner below to the gangster.

After promising to procure the best of legal talent for him, Mueller, who had cooled off, somewhat, told Captain McKenzie enough to convince him that Gus was his lost son. He and Gus, who had followed below, wept tears of joy as the gangster told the date and described how his wife had stolen the baby that had strayed from its parents on the boat.

"I'm sorry you can't take Darlington away privately, Chief," Gus said to the police official who had just come aboard. "He really doesn't belong with this gang; he isn't a hardened criminal and I'd like to spare his and his family's feelings."

"He'll have to take the same treatment as the rest of the gang," was the reply.

As the officers led the dejected-looking prisoners up the wharf, Darlington snarled over his shoulder:

"I'll remember you for this, Mister Gus!"

"Gus," spoke up Mr. Slayton, "the reward is all yours."

"But how could I have succeeded without the rest? They must all share."

"I'll look after them—'I will,'" answered the wealthy owner, as he waved a salute to Major Higgins. "It's all yours, my boy."

"Well, Gus, old pal," remarked Dora, "it looks as if I should go without my chocolates!"

"Yes, and I expect to have warm hands next winter!"

"Well, father," Gus went on, turning to Captain McKenzie, "I'm sorry it had to be, but I beat the *Maine Girl!*"

"Don't worry, sonny. I sold the vessel half an hour ago, while she was standing up the harbor. She'll enter the red-snapper business in the Gulf of Mexico — but not as the *Maine Girl.* Ah! Here's Wetmore now! How long will it take, Danie, to build me another schooner?"

"We showed 'em what kind of trees make shingles — we did," broke in Uncle El.

"Say, Gus," asked Dora as they stepped ashore, "if you had to choose where'd you tie up — Gotham, or — where?"

"Cape Ann for mine, Dora!" shouted the boy skipper.

THE END